

HIS GRANDMOTHERS

CHAPTER I.

WHO, WHEN, WHY AND HOW.

"There is something very delightful about French family life," I said, looking up from Littell to my husband. "It is singular that this people, who we say have no knowledge of homes, yet do what the Saxon apparently cannot, live not only peacefully, but happily, under the same roof with mothers-in-law and grandmothers-in-law. Four generations sometimes and never a broil! How do they do it? Though really I think myself half the trouble in families is needless; stupidly so. It is only to let one another alone; and probably the French, more volatile and easy-tempered than we, never see nor feel small chafes and rubs as we do. What do you think, Winthrop? I believe you are not attending at all."

"Then you believe you could do it? Suppose Grandmother Ogden should suddenly descend upon you?"

A chill ran through me. "Don't," I said. "If it were Grandmother May, now. She is good."

"Suppose it were both."

I looked up again, Winthrop held out to me two letters, and looked puzzled, amused, disturbed, all at once.

"What you will think about it, I don't know," he said. "The two bombs fell together this afternoon, and whether to place them before you to-night or not, I have doubted a good deal. It's inevitable, however. I knew this couldn't last."

I looked mechanically at the two envelopes, one, a sickly yellow one with the address staggering up hill; the other, dainty cream, with letters like old copperplate. I opened the yellow one and read:—

"MY DEAR GRANDSON,

"This is to let you know that my niece, Maria, having expired this day fortnight, and her affairs being all settled, I am ready to take the home with you, you promised when I was a mind to come. I shall be there

one week from to-day, and my goods will go at the same time.

"Your grandmother,

"M. OGDEN.

"P.S. You need not meet me. I ain't sure what way I shall come. I know my own way well enough."

"I never shall know mine again," I gasped, "I am blind and dumb."

"Read the other one. It will serve the same purpose as the second jump into the bramble bush, to quote from your favourite author."

I braced myself up. "The other one! It can't be any worse. Now!"

"MY DEAR GRANDSON WINTHROP,

"I had counted, as you know, upon spending my last days in my dear old home, which your mother loved to the last, but it is willed otherwise. Through old Culligan's carelessness, the kitchen took fire yesterday, and from it the rest of the house. My life was spared, though I am greatly overcome by the shock, and some of my furniture was saved. The neighbours think it very wrong for me to have lived almost alone so long, and now that my home is gone, I am ready to take the one you offered when I should need it. I have furniture enough for a bedroom, and will bring it unless you had rather not. Write me what will please you best. Tell Eleanor, with my love, that I grieve to bring my old age and infirmities to her, but that it will not be for long, and I shall try to be as little trouble as possible.

"Your loving Grandmother,

"SIBYL MAY.

"P.S. You always wanted the old side-board and clock. Both are saved, only the sun and moon part of the clock is gone."

"Poor soul! What a loss for her! What a shock!" I said. "I have never seen that old house after all. She has some sense of fitness. Grandmother Ogden does not even mention my name."

"She does not very much recognize the existence of any woman but herself," Winthrop said, looking at me encouragingly. "She is a type of a great many New England

women? Whatever a man does is likely to be right; whatever a woman, always excepting herself, probably wrong. She is my father's mother, and I am bound to say has always been good to me, as she was to him. She worked herself almost to death to help him through college, a thousand times harder than he wished or would have allowed could he have helped it, and yet she spoiled my mother's life in good part. I have a curious mixture of feelings toward her. Believe me, I would not have her here if I could help it, but you see I cannot. She has always been with me till father died and Maria needed her. Speak it out, Eleanor. Don't let any considerations restrain you. We will consider her a purely impersonal grandmother, who can be criticised without hurting anybody's feelings."

"I never saw her but once," I said, rage and mirth struggling together. "Will we ever forget it? Horrid thing! And to think she is coming here to live! I never heard anything pleasant about her, except that she worked herself to skin and bone for people, and that is not strictly pleasant. What shall we do?"

Winthrop looked at me reflectively.

"If you only had two, things would balance better," he said. "It's a calamity that you have no relations. Can't you think of one?"

"Only poor Aunt Anna, in Washington, and she hates the north so, no power could bring her here. These 'presumptuous villains of Yankees, she is always railing against, would kill her in a month. Winthrop, she will want breakfast at six and dinner at twelve. I shall go wild."

"Set your mind at rest on those points," Winthrop said, a little glint of resolution in his eyes. "We will keep our home the same as much as we can. It won't be so bad. She always did stay in her room a good deal. She has the old clothes of several generations, and mends them periodically. How lucky that we have plenty of room and need not crowd!"

"But the house is bursting with furniture now, and those very rooms are pretty as possible. We shall have to store it, if they bring theirs. Suppose we leave both as they are. Perhaps they will like them well enough not to change."

"No such good luck," said Winthrop. "The attic is enormous, I never knew why before. Now it will be full. We shall feel that we came over in the Mayflower. Do you know these letters were both written the same day. To-day is *Mori* day. Grandmother Ogden will be here on Friday. Make the most of your time, Eleanor. The other G. had better come at the same time, hadn't she,

and let her boxes follow? The two shocks may as well be taken together as singly. I'll telegraph her to-morrow to have old Cole pack all she wants to bring, and start herself on Friday."

"Don't. How can you! Friday, when you know something would be sure to happen. Thursday or Saturday," I said, half ashamed of the superstition which would hold, no matter how well argued down. "There will never be anything but trouble if they come Friday. Thursday is the Thomas Rehearsal, but I shall be back in ample time to meet them."

"Very well; as you like," Winthrop said absently, looking about the room as if he wondered whether its cheeriness would last after the two old people had taken their places there.

"There is Fanny too," I went on, a new phase occurring. "What will she think and what will they think. We meant to have such a lovely time together with our music and all, and now everything must give way. I told you long ago I was selfish, Winthrop. I knew it tolerably, but I am aghast to see how intensely I do not want this to be. We are so happy and comfortable, and if there is an earthquake in the kitchen nobody knows but ourselves. Grandmother Ogden knows all the house-keeping that ever was, and I'm afraid the other G. does too. They will see all the weak spots in my armour, and I shall bristle with arrows thrust into my tenderest points. 'Quills upon the fretful porcupine' will not be a circumstance to my future appearance. Oh, me!"

"I admit everything and all besides so far as Grandmother Ogden is concerned, Eleanor. But the other—by the way, have I told you, I don't believe I have, that in strict fact she is not my grandmother at all?"

"Not your grandmother! Then who is she? Why, she is coming here?" I almost screamed, amazement and indignation sending my voice up to its most detestable pitch.

"She is grandfather's second wife, but she brought up all his six children, and no own mother could have been more devoted. My mother never thought of any difference, and I never knew till a few years ago that the tie was not one of blood. She is a pretty old lady, and grandfather petted her like a baby. She loves young people, and flowers and gay caps, and in sacred confidence, Eleanor, she is as irrelevant as Mrs. Nickleby, and talks out the whole of her simple old mind."

"My step-grandmother-in-law," I said, quite unable to recover from this last shock. "It's absurd. There is no room for sentiment, or duty, or anything. Hasn't she any

money? Hasn't Mrs. Ogden any money? Can't they board somewhere?"

Winthrop ran his fingers through his hair despondently.

"No, to all the three questions. At any rate, not enough for that. Grandmother Ogden has two hundred a year and pays all her expenses rigidly. Never allows me to pay even a horse-car fare. Grandmother May rented half her house and boarded with the people by way of payment. She cannot have more than a hundred a year, now that is gone. She had a good deal of her own, but grandfather's brother, the family scamp, spirited it away, with plenty more."

"I see that it's inevitable. Please be perfectly quiet, Winthrop. I'm going to think, and whenever anything particularly awful occurs to me, I shall tell you at once."

I leaned back in my low chair and looked about. Nothing grand, but everything so comfortable and homelike. The cheery open fire, the soft light from the German student lamp; books and pictures all about. Rubenstein, the family cat, on his cushion, and lazy Nap stretched out on the rug, evidently, from sudden starts and snaps, worrying an imaginary cat, as he longed to do with Rubenstein, whose presence was a source of anguish to his doggish soul. Five years before I had been a teacher in a great school. Winthrop had never seen me, and this very room was a stifling piece of splendour, opened and used for state gatherings, never at any other time. Then we met at Mt. Desert. I could recall every least detail, and when my next term closed, my resignation was given, and we came home to the old place, which had been rented ever since old Mr. Ogden's death. Winthrop had boarded in New York, and at first proposed our living there, but finding our joint incomes would mean very little in city housekeeping, decided to try the country instead.

Grandmother Ogden had come to the wedding. She was seventy-one then, but looked not over sixty. It was in church, but a remote country church, and very quiet and simple. She looked me through and through unsmilingly. In point of fact, she glared, only I was too preoccupied to think much about it. We took boat up the river that afternoon, having said good-by to the party of friends at the depot where we separated. It was a burning July day. The deck was crowded, but Winthrop secured two arm-chairs, and I sat, looking down the long cabin, and waiting for his return. I am just near-sighted enough to insist upon not carrying glasses, and as I looked, would not for a moment believe my eyes. There, pushing her way through the crowd, the same grim,

black bonnet, the same little musty black bag which had come to the wedding, came grandmother Ogden, looking on every side, and making a dash forward as she saw Winthrop.

"I couldn't let you, I couldn't!" she said in an agonized sort of voice which fixed the attention of all about us. "You've taken away my grandchild and I can't get over it. You meant well enough, but I can't and won't let him go alone!"

Now as Winthrop was then thirty-one and I twenty-six, it might reasonably be supposed safe to let him go alone. There was a general smile. How could any one help it, as the tall, dignified man, fiery red as to face, but composed in manner, seated her in the reserved chair, as if nothing could be more natural or fitting than to take one's grandmother on one's wedding journey.

I flew to my stateroom, wishing I could drop her overboard. Then a degree of pity for the lonely old woman came over me. I determined to make the best of it and returned to the deck. Evidently Winthrop had been speaking his mind. There was a subdued sniff now and then from Mrs. Ogden, who, however, tried to make herself agreeable. We parted next morning at Albany, and I expected, with inward dread, to find her at Glenville on our return. Fortunately for us, her only other relative, an invalid niece, sent a pitiful appeal to come and care for her last days, and she went. The days ran on into months and years, and I had almost forgotten our time was to come. We had never met again, and save for the duty letter sent two or three times a year, she was never in my mind. We had come home to the old place, which was greatly out of repair, but with all sorts of possibilities. Mr. Ogden had bought it ten years before his death and made over a small house into a larger one, with many curious and unexpected ups and downs, where old and new joined. The rooms most used had been two small ones in the old part, the new parlour and library being far too fine for ordinary wear.

Here Mrs. Ogden had revelled in work, at first insisting on keeping no servant, and spending much of her day on her hands and knees, for moths attacked the shut up rooms, and she waged constant war against them.

Happily the carpets, a nightmare of magenta fruit pouring from blue and pink horns of plenty, were eaten threadbare, and my first act was to order them to the barn, where Tecumseh took them with a sigh. Tecumseh "went with the place;" had been there when Mr. Ogden bought it, and so far

as I could tell, would continue years after we had resigned it. He was Yankee to the core; had pronounced views on all points, and answered to the name of Tea.

In the kitchen I found another permanent inhabitant. Catherine, an orphan, brought up by Mrs. Ogden; a sphinx-like and terrible creature, who ordered me out of her quarters and threatened to complain of me to my husband.

"I am mistress of the house," I said. "If you choose to stay and treat me as such, very well. If not, you can go."

She went, much to her own astonishment, with an attic-ful of property left her by Mr. Ogden, and liberty and its price, eternal vigilance, began. I had theories by the dozen, and knew the household wheels could move easily, but oh, what screeches and groans were the result of their revolutions for many weeks! Without one atom of practical experience and with five new cook-books, I fought my way to successful living. My poor Winthrop ate abominations of all sorts with an equanimity which I consider now simply marvellous. I would learn to cook, and I did, and then, having gone through a series of miseries with Bridgets and Noras and Anns, I took a young American girl of seventeen and determined to train her. This process was still under way and the results becoming daily more marked. We were far from rich. Only "comfortably off," and if we kept a man and horse could afford only one servant. A good deal of work thus fell to my share, but I did not care. I loved my home, every inch of it; for had I not laboured and suffered, till the stiffness of years gradually passed away, and a sense of harmony and comfort filled every room? The great parlour had become library and sitting-room in one. The former library proved the brightest of dining-rooms, and I deliberately locked up the two on the other side of the house and put away the keys. They were simply more space to be dusted and swept, and I did not want them. The chambers overhead were to be the two grandmothers', for only now and then had they been filled with guests, the spare room proper being over the library and next my own room.

We were in spotless order, having just undergone a spring cleaning, and I rejoiced that we should begin so. Fanny, my pet scholar, now a lovely young woman, was to be with me all summer. I thought of our boating, our music, the cooking school, for Fanny professed she was coming to take lessons; the cold blue eyes that would watch it all, and the complications ahead, till my spirit failed within me and I sat up with a groan.

"I thought it would end in that way," said Winthrop. "I have been watching you, and your face is dreary enough to darken even the firelight. Come, Eleanor. We are not South Sea Islanders. We can't knock our aged relatives on the head and then make a meal of them. I know it's a pull, but be thankful they are not paralytics or lunatics."

"If they only were, we would hire a good nurse and I would watch her severely, or if they were very deaf, I might practise and not feel I was spoiling their naps. There is no use in thinking any more. I suppose we were having too good a time, though truly we had gone through a good deal to secure it. They will want green tea and feather beds, and the thermometer at ninety degrees all winter. Winthrop, it is simply awful! I wish Mrs. Ogden was going to an Old Ladies' Home, and we could try one at a time, say six months apiece. It's no use. I don't see how I can bear it. Yes, I do, too, you dear old thing! Don't mind the scolding. We'll see, only I feel as if Sam Weller's double hextra magnifying glass were going to be placed over me and my omissions and commissions. There's another thing. Mrs. Ogden thinks the house is just as she left it. She'll become rigid as Mr. F's aunt when she enters this parlour. On the whole, I am glad Fanny is coming, because her being company will partially protect me."

"Come up stairs," said Winthrop. "I want to look at the space and see if grandmother will have room to stand if she brings all she wants. We'll have the old clock on the landing. Where shall the sideboard go?"

"Not another thing about anything to-night, 'an' you love me, Hal.' My brain is a mere sieve. I'm actually exhausted. To-morrow we can plan."

CHAPTER II.

TEA.

Reflections on duty ought to come at this point, and the record that, with early morning, a sweet spirit of self-sacrifice filled my soul, and I longed for the moment wherein I might embrace both grandmothers. Truth compels an opposite statement, and I mean to be strictly literal as I can. But truth and light being synonymous, and light taking the colour of whatever medium it passes through, you will see that I, being blue as indigo within and purple with indignation without, that a change must be made, to say nothing of a suspicion of green in the way of jealousy that anyone had a right to Winthrop but myself, must necessarily make a parti-coloured statement. I did keep my worst feelings to

myself, and drove Winthrop to the depot as usual, returning slowly as even Prince's soul could desire, and thinking all the way. On the way down the great express-waggon passed us, but I did not look up. Usually, unless rainy, I drove straight up to the barn, for it was one of the tacitly understood laws of the place, that unless perfectly convenient for himself, Tea should never appear at such times, or indeed any times. This morning the doors were open and a strange array filled all the available space. Tea stood in the midst, and his small eyes twinkled as he looked from them to me.

"It's Mis' Ogden's things, Mis' Winthrop; the things she took when she went to Mariar," he said, "and here's her letter to me about 'em. She says she shall bring boxes with her, but this bed has got to be set up in her room before she gets here. She can't sleep no way on anything but a sackin' bottom, an' she ses I know jest what used to be in her room, an' I'm to set 'em all up the way I know she wants 'em. Fact is, she'd hev a fit in that room the way you've got it, with your frills and fuss and what not, an' picters an' the rest, she's got picters, but they ain't your kind. Where'll I put your things so's to begin?"

"I will let you know when I am ready to have you come in," I said with dignity. Tea looked at me critically. It was always a debate in his mind whether we were friends or foes. Foes certainly, when it became a question of altering anything indoors or out. Ten years with the Ogden family had convinced him of the perfection of everything belonging to them, and my five years' reign seemed to him utter anarchy and upheaval. Still there was a sense of humour in the man which sometimes played over his leathery countenance, and lighted up his melancholy brown eyes, and at heart he was kindness itself. No mummy could well have been leaner. His bones seemed to creak as he walked. His best fitting clothes flapped wildly in the wind, and his worst were merely bags in which he lost himself each morning, and hitched promiscuously all day in pursuit of stray bone which might help to fill out an arm or a leg. His house was at the upper end of our eight acres. In it dwelt his fourth wife with three children, the youngest, a weakened and attenuated baby, so startlingly like Tea that it was as if we viewed him through the small end of an opera glass.

"I've hed four sorts o' wives," he said one day in a burst of confidence. "All kinds you might say. None of 'em was healthy, but then the chills wouldn't let 'em be. Seliny was the fust, and as smart a gal as ever you see, Mis' Winthrop. That was when I was in

Vermont yet with my own folks. She hed gallopin' consumption, an' died an' left two, an' the old folks took 'em an' I might jest as well not a had 'em. That sort of broke me up an' I went to Illinois. Hed the shakes so I couldn't stand still long enough to be married, so I went up into Wisconsin an' so back an' forth for fifteen years. Buried two out there an' didn't mean to try my luck no more, an' I came east. Then up to one o' my brother's-in-law in Penn. when I went up to get Prince for Mr. Ogden, I hed this chance for an eddicated one, an' I took it. She was a teachin' then; leather work, an' wax flowers, an' paintin' an' sich, an' her folks thought it was a step down for her cos I wasn't very forehanded. So I brought her here an' she's done pretty well considerin', only folks aint sociable an' she don't no ways like it, that I don't set up for myself. Nigh sixty years old an' a hired man hain't no business to go together, she says, an' I tell her out of a song she sings, that "the lightnings may flash an' the loud thunder rattle" everything to smash, but we've got our house an' our reg'lar pay good as any minister up country. Squash bugs nor potato bugs, nor none of the forty bugs that's after apple-tree forty-one, the Agriculturist says, don't none of 'em cut us short. Mr. Win, he says I shall end my days here. I'd like to see any common Irisher runnin' that steam furnace o' yourn. It's bad as a high pressure engine on the Mississippi. The Gay's man would blow you higher'n a kite before he'd been at it ten minutes."

Poor Tea! Never was there a more shiftless, hopeless lump of incompetency and pretension than number four, chosen for her "edication." Dirt reigned. Even Tea's strong bump of order could do but little against the hopeless confusion which filled what might have been a comfortable and pretty home. The children were miracles of dirt; and I won Mrs. Fuller's undying enmity by giving Norma Annette a bath one day and sending her home clean. She was a pretty child, and I could have been very fond of her. Even the baby would have been better than nothing, but they all smelled and felt alike, sticky, clammy and generally unpleasant. Winthrop would not let them come near him, and we satisfied our consciences by filling their stockings profusely at Christmas. Mrs. Fuller rocked all day and perhaps all night, and what mind she may have had in the beginning had been wagged back and forth till useless for any practical purpose. It came over me strongly at times that something ought to be done, but what? Here was Home Missionary work at my door, yet a chronic disinclination to meddle with anybody's private life, kept me

from speaking my mind. Tea had the sturdy Yankee independence, asked no favours and made no complaint. He was an ardent Methodist; something of a Spiritualist; had a gift in prayer, so they said; was an Odd Fellow, a Good Templar, and a Grahamite of the old school, a firm believer in patent medicines and equally so in the Indian doctor who came twice a year. In short, Tea, instead of trying one set of ideas till tired of them and then taking up a new, had judiciously kept the whole life-long accumulation, working them into an ingenious sort of mosaic, and never at a loss for every one.

He looked after me as I turned towards the house.

"Then you're a goin' to have 'em set up?"

"Certainly, Tea, but not this morning. You can come in when I ring the barn bell, and take down the bed already there."

"'Taint none o' my affair," said Tea, backing into the harness closet, "only Mis' Ogden, she's used to bossing, and when folks begins with givin' her her head she's likely to keep it. She's a master hand for havin' her own way, an' it she is seventy-six, she's spryer'n I be, an' sassier," he added under his breath. "Least ways she used to be."

"Did you ever see the other grandmother Tea? Mrs. May?"

"No I hain't. Mr. Ogden, he set a heap by her, but Mis' Ogden, she can't bear the sight of her."

"Well Tea, she is coming this week to live here. Coming the same day as old Mrs. Ogden."

Tea actually staggered.

"The Lord preserve us!" he said solemnly. "It can't be done! For Massy's sake, don't you know it can't?"

"It is to be done, and therefore it can be," I said, disguising the feeling with which Tea's unaffected horror weighed me down. Tea made straight for his own house, shaking his head as if he had been wound up and could not stop. I went in and up to the pretty room, all rose colour and dainty gray, took down curtains and photographs, put away vases and knick-knacks of all sorts, and then rang for Tea to do his part.

By night it was as desperate and maddening a room as I have ever entered. A huge bed of cherry wood filled up one side; a chest of drawers without one redeeming feature in outline, or bit of brass, an unpromising looking secretary, a rocking-chair that would not rock but only jerked, a shabby washstand and chairs of every degree of ugliness, and before each and all, odd strips of carpet, in patterns and colours more dreadful than anything I had ever imagined.

"Her trunks goes under the bed, and two or three of 'em piles up against the mantle-

tree shelf," said Tea. "She always will have 'em under her eye. These 'ere things she brought from Portland forty years ago when her son married, an' she sets great store by 'em. There aint no furniture in the house up to 'em. Mr. Ogden, he wanted to new-furnish her room an give away these things, but she wouldn't hear to it. Said she was too old to change, an' she is, that's a fact. I didn't know as you'd be willin' to tear up, but there! folks never does what other folks looks to have 'em," and Tea, after a slight pause as if he would give me time to unbosom myself, retired, whistling softly, always a sign of perplexity with him.

"I shouldn't ever suppose I was in your house, Mrs Ogden," Katy said, as we tried with flannel and linseed oil, to rub off some of the marks of travel. "I don't know as I ever saw anything just like it before. Did you?"

"No, Katy," I answered with perfect honesty, "I never did. But we must remember she is very old and does not think much whether a thing is pretty or not. As long as she has what she has been used to, and is happy and comfortable, we have nothing to say."

"Well, I wish togracious sakes they wasn't coming!" Katy said ruefully, as she went back to her washing. How many times I echoed the wish that day! Books failed, the piano had no music in it, and at last I made ready for a long walk, only to be stopped by my most designable neighbor, Mrs. Wingate, a prying, stupid woman, whose curiosity it required all my strategy never to satisfy. If it had only been pretty, gentle Mrs. Gay, I could have opened my heart and probably felt better, but as it was, Mrs. Wingate probed in every direction, and at last left, outwardly smiling, inwardly disappointed, while I was nervous or cross enough to know I must keep away from every one just then. The walk did do some good, however, though the deepest of Jersey mud confined me strictly to plank walk and allowed no straying aside after possible dandelions. It was early April, and a true spring feeling in the air. Grass showed green in sunny spots, buds were swelling, and about every delicate twig outlined the blue, seemed a misty suggestion of leaves to be. Below me lay the village; beyond rose the blue line of Jersey hills, and towards the north the sharp cleft in the mountain, beyond which were the great rocks of Passaic Falls. A peaceful, quiet outlook, which rested me wonderfully as it always did. The old postmaster gave me a handful of crocuses with my mail, and I turned homeward far more reasonable than my neighbour had left me.

"It must be that I am not fit to live with

ways will have the things she wants years ago when the great store by the sea in the house wanted to new these things, and she said she was at a fact. I tried to tear up, but other folks after a slight time to unthinkingly softly, him. I was in your as we tried rub off some I don't know as I before. Did

with perfect does not think or not. As been used to, e, we have

es they wasn't as she went any times I books failed, the last I made e stopped by rs. Wingate, a curiosity it satisfy. If Mrs. Gay, I and probably rs. Wingate at last left, disappointed, ough to know e just then. ver, though confined n eed no strays. It was eeling in the sunny spots, very delicate e misty sug- me lay the ne of Jersey sharp cleft h were the A peaceful, wonderfully master gave y mail, and sonable than

to live with

people," I said to myself: "I am happy and contented alone, or with just the friends I care for, but this frightful calling! The idea that anybody has the right to enter my house, torment me for an hour with useless curiosity, force me to rack my brains for anything that will keep her quiet, and then leave me, prepared to come again and do the same work. She steals my time and temper and upsets me altogether. Nice people are—nice. Every-day people are detestable, except just to be kind to them if they come in your way. I am my Double, and he, she, or it has undone me many a time and will do it again. Why could I have not been one thing or another?"

It was a little hard. All through my youth my own temperament had been a torment and puzzle to myself, and equally to those who had me in charge. When too old for any radical change, I came to understand it. In me were mingled the inheritance from a southern mother, warm-hearted, impulsive and loving, and a keen, cold, logical, New-England father, who rarely demonstrated the slightest feeling. Both died in my childhood, leaving me sufficient money for an education and little more. School received and kept me till old enough to follow the vocation of most educated New-England girls—teaching. I had my father's cold exterior, his sarcassical tongue, and love of hooks, and hid well underneath, my mother's impulsiveness and passionate love of every beautiful thing. I had few friends and wanted but few. Talking was never easy unless I thoroughly knew my companion. Then there was no limit, and even Winthrop, who knew me better than anybody in the world, looked on at times in mute wonder.

"It's like the bottle that held the Afrite," he said one day. "The cork once out there is next to infinite expansion, and I see no immediate means of getting it back again."

His quiet, steady temperament was my greatest blessing. My ups and downs astonished and amused him, and he never ceased wondering at the contradictions of my daily life. He called me unselfish and sweet-natured, but also at times, T. G. N. A. O., The Great North American Objector, abbreviated, because the letters included a household verb I sometimes conjugated, To Nag. The reverse of a proposition always presented itself to me. To oppose at first seemed an instinct, carefully hidden because I knew my own weakness, but always ready to show itself. Talk it all out—oppose a plan bitterly and vehemently, and then find myself ready and eager for its fulfilment. It was mortifying and depressing, but with Winthrop I could say:

"Now let me vituperate awhile, and we will see how it comes out."

With others the argument had to go on inside, and I became confused and stupid and uncomfortable altogether. Also, I was intensely irritable. That, too, I covered up generally; but all sorts of things jarred and fretted me. Great troubles I bore well. Daily vexations made me fierce, and there were many times when I went about with my lips tight shut, determined the peevishness and irritation should at least not be visited upon any one near me. I could always be patient with ignorance if there was the least gleam of desire to learn. Against ingrained stupidity and narrowness and meanness I fought with all my strength, often enough worsted. My neighbours' opinions of me varied. Some pronounced me a Southern aristocrat, others a "stuck up Bostoner," and a few were pleasant, congenial people, though even these I preferred to see when I felt like it, and could never tolerate the perpetual running in and out in vogue in Glenville. I suppose a school gave opportunities enough for self-government and development, but family life bristled with small vexations to which I had always been a stranger. If with Winthrop's patience and Katy's constant good nature, I often felt, as Tea characterized his baby, "crosser'n pisen an' two sticks," how would it be when the new order began?

So I meditated walking home, growing depressed again with every step, till I entered our gate and stood for a moment under the great chestnut-tree. The sun had set, leaving only a faint, rosy flush, the dark blue line of the hills clear against it. Winthrop's kind voice came from the open door. "Why, little lady, I missed you. What's the matter?"

"It comes into my head continually," I said, running in, and crying weakly at last. "I'm sure I don't know when I learned it, nor why! 'If thou hast run with footmen and they have wearied thee, how then canst thou contend with horses; and if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst, thy strength failed thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?'"

"And I remember something far more comfortable, Eleanor. 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee.' Your prophet is a dolorous one. Mine has better words. There are sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, you know, and if the Jordan does roll furiously, there is always a way over. Come in, little wife, and leave troubles outside. Here is a letter from Fanny, and I saw her brother to-day. She is coming the 25th, so

you will have just time to get used to the new dispensation. I have been up stairs and it looks as fearfully natural as possible. Grandmother Ogden ought to be happy. Suppose you just put a feather bed in the other room, and the other G. may like its brightness so well that there need be no change. Here is tea. How hungry I am! I am spoiled for restaurants forever, and it is your doing."

"Bless your heart, you comfortable man!" I said with a spasmodic hug. "What a blessing you're not like me! We will have a good evening, even if, like Jo, I did 'weep a little weep,' and now at last I shall be good."

CHAPTER III.

KATY.

The morning mail brought two notes, one from Mrs. Ogden, postmarked Boston, in which she said she might stay there till Friday night and come by boat, but in any case she could take care of herself. The other was from Mrs. May, saying that her escort could not leave until Friday night, and that she should be at the Grand Central at ten on Saturday, if nothing happened.

I went in to the Thomas Rehearsal with a quiet mind, though wondering, for a moment, how the next one would find me. Friday passed as usual, save that Katy's tendency to leaving dust in every corner where my short-sighted eyes could not reach, was nipped in the bud more remorselessly than usual. I examined every chair rung with anxious scrutiny, and delivered such a homily on the wickedness of shirking, and the baseness of not doing the dark corners as absolutely well as the bright, that Katy visibly shrunk.

"If either of the old ladies has any worse eye for dirt than you, Mrs. Ogden, I pity their feelings," she said, meekly going over the stairs a second time. "I never knew there was so much to take notice of. Seems to me a woman isn't for anything else but just to be rooting and grubbing everywhere, and no time to turn round. You can't ever get through."

"If you do as I tell you, Katy, do each thing thoroughly, not spill and drop in every direction as a stupid Irish girl does, when you are through, you are through, and can rest and enjoy it. Much as I dislike work, it certainly pays to be sweet and clean everywhere."

"Dislike it!" Katy said, dropping her duster. "I thought you loved it from the bottom of your heart, the way you fly round into everything, and always smelling into

every closet and all. I can't drop a crumb but what you know."

"All the result of education," I laughed. "When you have done exactly as you are told a year longer, there will be no corners to smell, I hope, and I may be able to trust you to bring each day through well. You improve all the time. I mean you to be a model."

Katy smiled faintly. Being a model, while delightful theoretically, was a world of trouble practically. Her life as a factory girl had almost unfitted her for anything else. Hard work all day; foolish and often worse than foolish talk on the way home, and the poor earnings spent in tarlatan and cheap ribbons for the weekly dances in the winter.

I had seen her several times on Sunday, when she came with her father to call at Tea's, and liked her face, which had pretty, soft, blue eyes, and a good look, even under the tawdry hat and feather. One day I called her in, proposed she should leave the factory and come to me, and gave her a week to think it over. I doubted her coming. The pressure was strong against her. The factory girls scorned the Irish and German servants, and announced that "they weren't going to be bossed over by no mistresses." Anything, even sin, was better than work in anybody's kitchen; and though the mills had lately run on half time, and the operatives barely kept soul and body together, no one could have induced the silly, frowzy creatures to do housework. So when another Sunday came and with it Katy to inform me that she would come the first of the month, but was afraid I shouldn't like her, I was both astonished and pleased.

"I can do some things," she said. "I always washed and ironed when I was home, and did dishes and such, but I can't cook much. I'd love to, though. I read 'We Girls,' and it seemed to me the way they did it must be fun."

"Blessings on you, Mrs. Whitney!" I said to myself. "You are worth a million sermons. Then you can read, Katy, and have been to school?"

Katy's blue eyes opened wide. "Yes, indeed, ma'am. I went three terms to school when father lived in Newark, and some up in Hartford, and I read everything I can get. But I haven't had much chance, and I thought that if I tried housework, may be I could get a little time now and then. But the girls do make such fun of me it seemed as if I couldn't stand it. I do wish I could come now."

In a week my kitchen bade good-by to Bridgets. Mrs. Slapson, the one-eyed genius who made over mattresses, went out

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nursing, made shrouds, or scrubbed and whitewashed with equally grim determination, came over for three days and left the greasy evil smelling room in spotless order. Every piece of tin shone; every pot and kettle was grimless. The servant's room was turned out of doors, so to speak, aired, scrubbed, whitewashed, disinfected in every crack and corner. I was determined Katy should begin under the best auspices. If she failed, I could only try again.

The first month was heart-rending. Katy's esthetic tastes were her bane and mine. She stood, duster in hand, before pictures and books; burned the breakfast while she studied the morning papers, sat in the spare room with closed eyes imagining it hers, and most fatal of all, broke dishes with Celtic ease and celerity. Two methods stopped this. First, a lesson on China, not the country, but the production, a bringing together my various bits of majolica, et cetera, and putting into form stray fragments of knowledge regarding them. Their cost was a revelation to her, and their history apparently fascinating. Then the rule laid down once for all that, unless proved to be wholly accidental and unavoidable, half the cost of whatever she broke should be deducted from her wages.

The effect was salutary and decisive. From that day to this nicks and cracks are almost unknown, and the rule has never been enforced but once.

Her memory was merely a name. Orders at nine left no trace at ten. Cake left in her charge burned to a crisp. Water boiled away from meat or vegetables, and solder ran at will over the range. Meals, unless I stood over them, were seldom in season, and "I forgot" was the kitchen watchword. This was apparently constitutional, and I adopted the only mode of cure that occurred. Each day's work was written out fully, every item in the order it was likely to occur, and pinned to the kitchen wall, with directions to check off each one as accomplished. Side by side with this hung the bill of fare for the day, the hour of each meal given, and any necessary hints as to preparing the different dishes. This seems troublesome, but in reality saves many vexations for both mistress and maid. My own beginning had filled me with awe at the multitude of little things a housekeeper must remember daily, and in the inevitable disaster following thick, and following faster if anything was allowed to get the upper hand, I realized, as never before, the meaning of a place where neither moth nor rust can corrupt. The daily battle with dust and fluff, always triumphant and unsubdued save the one moment after cleaning, filled me with deepest respect for their

conqueror. How to keep them down and my courage up, to fight and yet have the leisure of victory, was the problem over which I puzzled daily, and which as time went on grew easier of solution. Katy did learn, slowly but surely, and though at times it seemed as if no young Hottentot could have had less sense of fitness, at others something would be done so carefully and daintily, as if real mind had gone into it, that I sighed gratefully and dared to look forward. She grew to appreciate the charm of thoroughness, and to take pride in her accumulating accomplishments. Saturday she called "Catechism day," for at that time I questioned her severely on whatever new thing she had learned through the week, from stewing of oysters to the best way of washing windows. The Squeersian method I found excellent, and adopted for many things.

Economy had become my hobby: the best way of utilizing the odds and ends; and here soup developed the means of absorption. Katy looked on in contemptuous astonishment, the first time she saw me take every scrap of bone and gristle, every drop of gravy remaining from our dinner of porter-house steak, and put them all in the earthen saucepan with the remains of some roast beef, the whole well covered with cold water and set where it could simmer but not boil. I showed her how to skim it carefully as it reached boiling point, the proper amount of salt, the taking out all the meat when tender, for a mince next morning, and straining the broth into a bowl, from which when quite cold every particle of fat could be removed, leaving a rich, jelly-like mass, suitable for either gravies or soup. It grew interesting to find how many varieties of soups could appear with this stock as foundation, and her respect for bones rose immensely.

"I wish I'd known some of these things at home," she said one day. "We could have been ever so much more comfortable. I tell mother, but she laughs, and says she guesses I'll wish myself back if that's the kind of living we have here."

"You may ask her over here some day, Katy, and you may dine together—perhaps she will change her mind."

"Well, it's all in my book," Katy said, pointing to a thick blank book I had bought her, in which her views of kitchen life were recorded. Her receipts for cooking and cleaning, and "elegant extracts" from books she read. "It's all there, and I can read it to her if she doesn't attend to what I say."

Her pitiful supply of clothing when she came, had moved my wonder that any girl could get on with so little. She grew ambitious, not for show, but for plenty of fresh, sweet belongings, and in six months her

whole appearance altered. Good food, regular hours, suitable clothing and a constantly growing intelligence made her more than I had dared to expect, though there were still many lapses, and to mourn more or less daily was part of her nature. I did not complain—my theory was vindicated. The race of trained and intelligent servants was not extinct. Patience and forbearance, and intelligent teaching, could still produce them, and even an American girl with a slight foundation of common sense could be made to believe service and the server alike honourable.

"It's all very well for you with no children," said Mrs. Wingate, who happened in this very Friday afternoon, and began at once upon her pet topic,—servants. "But I can assure you she'll be off just as you get her into your ways, and you'll have had your labour for your pains. There's no gratitude in them. I've had nine in four months, and I ought to know. I heard you let her come to the table and took her to concerts. I suppose next, you'll be giving her music and French and German lessons."

"You heard wrong as usual," I said impulsively, sorry when too late. "She understands perfectly that her work prevents her being in just the order I should wish my table companions. Now and then on Sunday when she was dressed for church she has come into tea. It is a great treat, and I know no better way of teaching her proper table manners."

Mrs. Wingate laughed a loud, disagreeable, rasping laugh.

"Well, I don't make companions of my servants," she said; "and I didn't suppose anybody as exclusive as you did it either. But then we all know you are very peculiar, Mrs. Ogden, and of course make allowances. Good-bye. Do come in soon."

I could have struck her as she sailed away, cool and insolent and stupid too. What use in trying to make the creature understand anything? Now she would go on her round of visits adding fresh items at every place as to Mrs. Ogden's peculiarities, and chuckling over my fondness for servants' society and avoidance of her own. Bah! why should one grow miserable over an idiot. As usual I rushed out to cool my hot cheeks and walk down my excitement. Half way down the hill the telegraph boy met and handed me one of the yellow-covered terrors, for much as Winthrop used this means of communication, I could never quite help a little fear in opening them. To-day, as all other days, there was no cause.

"Come in at six twenty," it read. "Will meet you at ferry. Have tickets for Henry Fifth."

"Of course then he is sure his grandmother will not be here to-night," I thought as I wrote, "Will be there," and turned back to make ready. We had a midnight train on Friday, the one concession allowed by our violently conservative branch road, to the sinful New Yorkers who would settle in New Jersey, and would clamour for some means of reaching amusements now and then. Katy fortunately was never afraid, and I left her with new calico to cut out, and a new story in which I was quite sure, dress, and time, and possible burglars would all be forgotten.

We went to the play, lost in delight at the superb setting, and the gallant Prince Hal, ate some of Dorlon's oysters afterwards, and took our train tired and sleepy, but convinced that we had done well. Two or three neighbours were there, and we chatted over the different opinions, as we walked up from the depot. Something unusual struck me as we neared home.

"Winthrop," I said, "it doesn't look right. Isn't there a light—there is a light in your grandmother's room!"

"Nonsense!" said Winthrop. "It is Tea looking to see if everything is right. He always does when we are away. That's the beauty of a man like Tea."

A dark figure rose before us from the bushes.

"It's me, Mrs. Ogden," said Katy's voice; "I just this minute came out because I thought it was time for you. She's come, an' she's up."

"She! Do you mean the old lady—Mrs. Ogden?"

"Yes ma'am," said Katy, breathless and incoherent. "She came at half past six, just after you'd gone, and walked in at the kitchen door."

"I says, 'who are you?' for she had a big basket and looked queer, and I never thought."

"Where are the folks?" she says. I wouldn't tell her, because I thought maybe it was a burglar disguised, and then she slapped down the basket and bag. 'I'm Mis' Ogden,' she says, 'an' I want my grandson.'

"'They've gone to the theatre,'" I says, for I saw her white hair. 'I'll get you some tea and your room is all ready.' 'I don't want none of your tea,' she says. 'If folks can't stay to home when they expect folks, I don't think much o' their manners.' Then she marched right up the back stairs, an' I lit a lamp and took it up. She just took off her things and laid them on the bed, and put her blanket shawl over her head, and went up to Tea's for supper. He came down with her when she was ready, and she went into every room in the house, groaning and banging doors, and then she come to the kitchen.

'Where's the parlour furniture,' she says,

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'and the carpets?' 'It's all there ma'am, just as it was when I come,' I says, 'I've never seen any other. 'Law, ma'am,' Tea says, 'you haven't no call to feel bad. Young folks has their ways same as old' I went into my room and shut the door. I was scared. I didn't know but she'd do something to me. She went into the parlour and drove out Rubenstein and Nep, and dusted off Rubenstein's cushion, and there she sits now. I went down and asked her if she wasn't tired and wanted to go to bed, and she said, if there was sitting up to be done. it wasn't for whiffets of girls, and I could go to mine fast as I pleased. She's been up garret and into all the closets, and tried all the locked doors, and she says everything has gone to distraction. I'm scart to death."

Here Katy broke down in tears. I had been too confounded to check the flow of her narrative, but plucked up courage now.

"I am ashamed of you, Kitty," I said. "Stop crying and go to bed now, and we will have breakfast at nine instead of eight, so that we can all rest. One old lady need not frighten anybody."

"You just wait and see," said Katy softly, running on to open the door. Rubenstein came mewling to meet us. To be turned out of doors was a new state of things, calling for immediate remonstrance. Nep barked for joy and rushed in, nearly upsetting Mrs. Ogden as she came forward and held out her hand to Winthrop, who kissed her and then looked about in a bewildered sort of way.

"Here is Eleanor," he said.

"I see her," returned Mrs. Ogden. "Are you well, El'ner? I should think likely, out at this hour of the night."

"I am perfectly well, thank you. I always am," I said, determined not to be daunted. "But I am so sorry you sat up. Your room was all ready and you must be very tired. We did not suppose you would come till to-morrow morning. I hope Katy gave you tea and made you comfortable."

"I went where I was expected and got all I needed," Mrs. Ogden returned with severe emphasis. "If Catharine had been here I should have asked for some tea, but it's tea I want, and not slops, and slops is all I look for from a girl like that."

"Katy makes excellent tea," I said. "I am something of a grandmother myself in my love of it, and when grandmother May comes we shall certainly need a bigger tea pot."

"It's too late to make any change," said the old lady, still with stony severity; "but I do feel to say this much, that if proper confidence had been shown and I told beforehand she was coming and what changes I was to find, I would never have set foot in the house again. To think of the shif'less-

ness and everything torn to atoms and wasted and spit upon that I toiled and slaved to keep nice!"

"There, grandmother! you are under the old roof again," Winthrop said decidedly, "and I hope you will be very happy. You are tired out. I'll go up stairs with you and see you are all right. I know your ways and Eleanor doesn't yet, though she soon will. She makes everybody comfortable, and we are and hope to be a very happy family."

"I'm glad to see you again, Winthrop," Mrs. Ogden said in a somewhat mollified tone. "Only I do wish I could see your face clean and smooth like your departed father's. He wouldn't have had such a brush each side his face, not for a mint of money. You never'll be equal to your father, Winthrop."

"Sons never are, are they?" said Winthrop starting towards the door.

"Good-night," I said, "or really it should be good-morning. Don't hurry at all. There are two bells, and we shall not have breakfast till nine."

"I take mine at six in summer and half past in winter," said the old lady turning upon me; "and if your help hasn't spunk enough to be up and have it ready, I'll do it myself?"

"Not to-morrow—Saturday is a bad day to begin," Winthrop said. "I have to go in at half past eight though, so we will compromise and have it at eight. That's only six hour's sleep. It'll never do."

This time I was careful to make no new suggestions, and the pair slowly ascended the stairs. I heard the opening of doors and windows and mysterious sounds of all sorts, and Winthrop did not appear until after two.

"I couldn't burst away the very first night," he said, "and she was ready to talk right on if I would listen. I've shaken her bed and all the bedclothes out of the window to please her, and I'm covered with fluff, or whatever you call it."

"Didn't I tell you there would be trouble if she came Friday?" I said desperately. "She will kill us all in a week."

"Not quite so bad as that," Winthrop said. "She was tired and upset to-night, and won't be so cranky to-morrow. It's extraordinary how little she alters. She hears just as well as ever, and seems just as strong. I don't understand it."

"One of Tea's comments—'She's pickled in ugliness'—rose to my lips, but I repressed it and only groaned—

"Don't talk any more," I said, "I'm too tired to speak."

Not too tired to think, however, and long after Winthrop was sound asleep I medit-

ed on ways and means, ending in a restless sleep, and a dream of something awful which surrounded and stifled me, and had always, when I could look, the face of Grandmother Ogden.

CHAPTER IV.

GREEK MEETS GREEK.

"I'm thankful you've come!" Katy exclaimed fervently, as just before breakfast I entered the kitchen. She looked flushed and worried, and a click near the back stairs, and a rustle of departing skirts, told me the cause. "The old lady told me she was chilly, and wanted to put her feet in the oven, and she's been there ever since half-past six watching everything I did. She says I keep a sight too much fire, and that she never saw nor heard of anybody chopping bread with a chopper. She says moulding is plenty if I use any strength, and I've no business to put any milk in it either. I told her I never seen no better bread than you learned me to make, and I guessed she'd think so to, and she just sniffed. She keeps sniffin,' and it makes me want to fly."

"That will do," I said. "Don't repeat what she says or does. I do not want to know, and it does no good."

Katy laid down her rolling-pin.

"Mis' Ogden," she said solemnly, "I'm ready to mind you anyway or anytime, but I'm free to say, if I've got to be still about HER, I shall bust. I shall just bust. I won't talk to Tea, nor anybody else, but if you won't let me talk to you I can't stand it. I know all about things growing, when you talk them over, and being best to keep still about vexy things, and folks' faults, but I don't care. I've got to speak now or split. Can't I?"

"When you cannot bear it another moment," I said, after a pause for reflection, and an inward smile at the distressed countenance before me. "But never till you are sure you cannot. Now hurry with breakfast. It is late."

Breakfast was too hurried for much observation. Mrs. Ogden smelled of the butter before she helped herself, and looked with extreme suspicion at everything offered her. She followed Winthrop to the door, and watched him out of sight, then turned about.

"I am sorry I must be busy most of the morning," I said, "but you will have plenty to do unpacking. Would you like any help?"

"I'm able to sort my own things myself," Mrs. Ogden said; "but I'll do the dishes first."

"Katy always does them," I said, "ex-

cept on washing day. I had rather she would."

"Oh!" said Grandmother Ogden with the sniff Katy had described, and which for so small a thing certainly could produce a powerful effect; so powerful that it came up through all my making of sponge cake and custards, and left me wishing for the thousandth time that life might have gone on in the old fashion.

Noon came before we thought of it, and I had just time to slip off my working dress and run to the door as Prince stopped before it, and a figure muffled in shawls and cloaks was lifted out by Winthrop and set on the piazza like a child.

"And there she is," said the brightest, sweetest old voice I had ever heard. "I'm dizzy as a coot, my dear, with all this travelling, but not too dizzy to give you a hug if you'll let me."

"You are a blessed old lady and I know it!" I said, forgetting reserve and prejudice of every sort, as I looked at the mild-eyed little body smiling upon me, and led her in. How she had ever stirred one inch after those wraps were put on, no one but herself will ever know. Layer after layer came off; furs, cloth cloak, shawl, sack, small shawl, knit jacket, cloud—

"You'll think I'm an onion, my dear," she said peacefully looking at the pile, as I unwound the cloud and brought to view a very little old lady, who had at first appeared stout enough for two of the reality. "I'm apt to be chilly across my shoulders, and there are draughts everywhere in the cars. No, don't take off my bonnet. I guess I'd better go up stairs right away, on account of my cap you know."

Winthrop picked up bag, hand-basket, shawl strap and paper-parcel, and I followed with the wraps.

"That is really the worst thing about getting old," Grandmother May said, as she climbed the stairs, stopping on each step like a child. "The trials I've had with caps first and last, and my own hair falling off till I was a sight to see, and always taking a basket out to spend the afternoon and take tea, better than a bag or a paper because it don't mash, but then either does very well. It's a beautiful place. Yes, and it's a beautiful room. I'm only sorry you've got to put an old grandmother into it; but then I'm no helpless, and you can send me off when you get tired of me."

Grandmother stopped for breath, and sat down in a rocking-chair looking about approvingly.

"It's my own colours," she said. "I always did love blue, and I'm light-minded enough to love it now. Folks talked some

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because I would wear blue ribbons, but it was your dear grandfather's own wish, Winthrop, because he was set against mourning. I did wear white considerable, but I came back to blue, and there's one with pink. Only one though, and a very pale pink," she went on looking anxiously at me; "but then I thought I might, even if I was over seventy, and if they didn't like it I'd keep it in the box. It isn't so very gay with a black silk, and it does look cheerful; but I'm not particular."

"There is nothing I have pined for more than to wear a cap with pale, pink ribbons, and now you can do it for me, grandmother." How easy the word came! "Lunch is ready whenever you are, unless you had rather lie down."

"I'll lie down afterwards," she said, looking at me with some curiosity in her gentle old eyes. "You won't mind my looking, because I've never seen you. It's too bad I just missed you that summer, and then I was so sick when you were married, but then we've time enough to look, and I'll hurry down."

While she took out the blue ribbons from the basket, I looked at her with equal curiosity. Time and life had dealt kindly with her. Save two or three lines in the forehead which came and went as she talked, the face had hardly a wrinkle, and her complexion might have made many a young girl envious. Her eyes were soft hazel, and a delicate high nose gave character which might otherwise have been wanting, while soft gray curls framed it all, only waiting for the blue ribbons to make her into a real picture. Mrs. Ogden tapped at the door and came in as we stood there. The two shook hands with some cordiality, though a shade passed over Mrs. May's face. Mrs. Ogden asked her some question about her journey, hoped she would be comfortable, and went down stairs.

One or two tears rolled down Mrs. May's face as she looked after her.

"You mustn't mind me," she said. I haven't seen your grandmother since your father died, Winthrop, and it brings it all back again. You weren't such a great fellow then,—over six feet I'm sure."

"Not quite: five feet eleven and a half in my stockings; six feet in my boots, but big enough to make two of you, you fairy grandmother. Come along, we are all hungry."

Mrs. Ogden sat reading the morning paper as we entered the room, and while we waited for the tea to come in, I took this, really the first opportunity I had had to look at her unobserved, and studied her face. She must have been a pretty girl when colour and light were there. Now the face was lined and seamed

with finest wrinkles, finer and closer than I had ever thought such lines could come. The forehead was high and narrow, the eyes large and well set, but the nose and mouth pinched and mean, the whole expression cold, suspicious and tyrannical. Tall and slender, without a fold or particle of trimming to break the outline, and with an uncompromising black cap owning one severe purple bow, she sat there, the incarnation of the New England goddess, "Faculty." Deep disapproval of all her surroundings seemed to emanate from her and form an atmosphere in which I was never likely to draw a deep breath. As she looked up, through the unconscious influence which always warns one of a watching eye, I read in hers all the dislike and distrust my own had sought to hide. Katy's face looked through the folding doors red and distressed, and I went towards the lunch-table at which she pointed mutely.

"What does it mean?" I said, looking in astonishment at the waiter where she sat my array of odd cups long since vanished to the kitchen. "Why have you put these on? Get the proper cups on at once."

"I can't," said Katy hopelessly. "Miss Ogden she come down an' she looked, an' sez them is her cups, bought with her own money, and they ain't to be used when ther's only the family here. She said stone china was plenty good for every day and she'd stop extravagance wherever she had a right. She said the big platters was hers and the vegetable dishes, but I told her I knew you had a new dinner set, and not more than one was hers anyway."

"They can be used when there's company," said Mrs. Ogden's voice behind me. "That's what they're for, and I have no objections, and I'm not going to see things go to destruction in my son's house, and I've put them away till they're needed."

"Very well," I said. "Would she ever know what force made the quiet of that 'very well?'" "Take whatever is yours and then there can be no difficulty. Katy you can take down the set my girls gave me. We will use that hereafter. You are growing so careful I think I can trust you not to break or nick then."

Mrs. Ogden looked aghast as we all sat down. Her economy was an instinct stronger from the culture of a lifetime, and used for other people's property quite as much as her own. To see these lovely cups with their delicate gold and brown monogram, brought down to replace her plain white ones, galled her very soul. Grandmother May nodded approvingly over her's. Busy talking with Winthrop, neither have noticed

the slight passage at arms, and I was glad of it.

"Tea tastes so much better out of real china," she said. "The worst thing about a family in the house and boarding with them was the thick, clumsy cups, but then they were dear, good people. I did have a little china saved from the fire," she went on, tears again filling her eyes. "Just some of mother's I had packed in a box; cups and saucers and the big punch bowl and the silver cups. That china is over a hundred years old, and I thought maybe you'd like to set it on the old sideboard; but then that's just as you like. Young people don't care much. I gave the other punch bowl to Mrs. Whitcomb, and she made cake in it. She thought it was an old thing not good for much. Lawful heart! How I did feel the day I went over and saw it on her kitchen table; but then I couldn't say a word. Folks have a right to do what they please with their own—"

"No they haven't," broke in Grandmother Ogden decidedly. "Nobody's a right to waste and destroy, and somebody ought to stop them if they do. If you hadn't been so free with your givings, you'd have had more to leave behind."

Grandmother May's delicate cheek flushed, and she looked straight at the belligerent old lady opposite.

"I've never been sorry for anything I gave away but once," she said, "and even then I had to remember, 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver,' and to thank Him when this dear boy came to take the place his mother left empty. We've him in common, Mrs. Ogden, and must make the most of him."

Here Winthrop, in terror of what might come next, began an enthusiastic description of the East River bridge. Grandmother May, whom we found dreaded the water, and had privately trembled and quaked while crossing the ferry, listened with deep attention, and announced finally that guns and pistols could not make her cross it.

"You needn't laugh," she said, "I've always hated ferries and bridges too, and I'm too old to help it now; but then I shan't be forced to, and 'tisn't as if I was an elephant and might break through any minute, and all the ropes in Haddam not strong enough to hoist me out."

"Grandmother you wander," said Winthrop. "Your tea is too strong."

"No it isn't at all, for that's what I saw. Yes, indeed, and the poor creature knew its keeper, and groaned and moaned to him fit to kill you, and the whole town on the bank watching for the bridge to go, but then it didn't for a day, till the ice jammed up more, and

the elephant went down with it; but then it was the rotten timber that let him through, and iron isn't so likely to, but then the water's salt and it wouldn't be so pleasant drowning as fresh."

Even Grandmother Ogden relaxed a little as Winthrop, lying back in his chair, laughed till the tears came, while Grandmother May giggled gently and then went on drinking her tea.

"That's beautiful bread," she said presently; "it really tastes like my mother's bread. It's Vermont butter, I know, isn't it? and such good tea. You haven't any butter, Eleanor — don't you think it's healthy?"

"Yes, indeed, only unfortunately I don't like it. I am an infallible judge of its quality though—"

"Eleanor's nose is her strong point," interrupted Winthrop, "and any gray hairs you may see are the result of over-exertion in hunting out the origin of some of its woes. She knows the exact character and range of every smell within ten miles."

"Does it smell fire easy?" Grandmother May asked, turning to me with deep interest. "They've always laughed at me for smelling so much fire, and it's strange enough that that one night I didn't. But then I was asleep and not thinking; but I'm sure I'd have sat up forty nights if that would have stopped it."

"I smell it when there is any," said Grandmother Ogden. "I should know the very second a whiff got in. I'm used to bearing things on my own mind; I never step into bed without looking everywhere. Had you been particular to look everywhere that night?"

At this critical point the expressman came with a load of trunks; an ancient haircloth, two or three chests, and one of sole leather ending with a mammoth Saratoga.

"Those old ones are full of bedding and books," said Grandmother May, who had trotted to the door and stood looking anxiously at them. "You can put them anywhere, but the others are full of things I want every day. If you wasn't too busy, Eleanor, maybe you'd help me unpack a little; but then I'm pretty tired. Mr. Whitcomb put me in a sleeping car, but I wasn't going to sleep when we might run off the track any minute, and so I said to myself I'd watch; I did nap, but then I couldn't help it."

"Come away," I said, leading her to the parlour windows where she could watch her treasures. "You will take cold in the open door."

"My heart! see old lady Ogden!" screamed Grandmother May, sinking upon a chair.

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"Winthrop! For pity's sake do see to your grandmother. I look for nothing but to see her fall dead in the midst of them."

Grandmother Ogden had taken one end of the trunks and was urging the much-amazed expressman up the steps.

"I ain't a going to have Winthrop strair himself nor Tea neither," she said. "I'm strong as either of 'em if I am seventy-six."

"Having proved it, grandmother, please go in," said Winthrop decidedly, as Tea came around the corner and the expressman drove away laughing.

"Don't you ever do such a thing again. ma'am," said Grandmother May earnestly, "I'd no more think of it than I'd fly; but then I'm a poor weak creature. I wish I was half as strong as you are."

"I never coddled myself nor was I coddled," returned Grandmother Ogden, half mollified. "I ain't afraid to do a day's work with anybody."

"Well, I'm thankful to rest," said Grandmother May. "When one gets our age there isn't much life left, and it's best to take it comfortably. I always remember what my blessed father used to say sitting in his arm-chair—

'Age should fly concourse; cover in retreat
Defects of judgment, and the will subdue:
Walk thoughtful on the silent solemn shore
Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon,
And out good works on board, and wait the
wind
That softly blows it into ports unknown.'

"Age should fly concourse—I believe it all but that, but I do love sociability, and I'm dreadful afraid I shall to the last; but then I don't know as there is any wickedness in it."

Grandmother Ogden looked sharply to see if anything personal were intended in "Defects of judgment and the will subdue," but relaxed again, apparently deciding it was merely poetry and not to be noticed.

By this time the trunks were all up stairs and Grandmother May hurried after.

"Time enough Monday," Winthrop said, as he unstrapped the large one for her. "You must sleep all the afternoon and not think of getting settled to-day. Now I'm off again. Take a nap and this evening we'll have some music. You love that."

"The bed does look inviting, but I don't know as I ought to go to sleep. I'll just put on my double gown and take a paper, and when I'm rested we'll begin to get acquainted," Grandmother May said, looking after Winthrop as he sprang into the buggy. You're not hard to get acquainted with, are you, Eleanor?"

"You will very soon find out," I laughed shutting her door and then running down.

Grandmother Ogden stood in the parlour door.

"Hadn't you better take a nap?" I asked. "You must be tired unpacking."

"I never waste daylight in sleeping," she answered; "if you've any mending I'll take that."

"Oh no! do amuse myself. Here are this month's magazines. You like Scribner, don't you?"

"I never amuse myself," said Mrs. Ogden with severe emphasis. "When I read I read for improvement, and when I work I work. I won't stand in your way though. If you're going to do the dishes, I'll wipe."

"No thank you, Katy does them, as I told you this morning, except washing and ironing days."

Then all I can say is you don't deserve china, and I'll see there's none of mine left down to be smashed," and Mrs. Ogden whisked up the stairs and shut her door vigorously.

This was depressing; but the sun was shining, and the air so inviting that I put on my hat and went out, first for a look at the flower beds and then down the hill and the wood across two fields, finding treasures of moss and pussy willows. A sense of responsibility came upon me as I opened my own gate again, but there was no sound in the house. Grandmother May was still asleep; and Grandmother Ogden had been locked in her own room ever since I left, and had just then gone up to Tea's, Katy said. The piano had not been open all day. I put my catkins in a little silver vase before me, and played all the spring songs which came to me, Mendelssohn's and Heller's and Schumann's half regretful gladness, the plaintive minor ending full and sweet like sunshine after April rain. Darkness was almost upon us as I turned to light the lamps, and saw behind me Grandmother Ogden, erect and silent.

"What do you call that you've been playing," she said. "It ain't a tune."

"That depends. I don't suppose Tea would call it a tune."

"Well, I may not know any mor'n Tea, but it sounds outlandish to me."

"I did not mean that," I hastened to explain. "You have heard good music, I know, for Winthrop's mother played beautifully, they say."

"She played the same kind of things you do," said Mrs. Ogden, uncompromisingly. "No tune nor anything but fumbling round on the keys. I like a tune if there's got to be music at all."

I sat down again and played Money Musk, Fisher's Hornpipe and a dozen other old

tunes and look up to see Grandmother May chasseeing into the room."

"I shoul'n't wonder if my cap was all crooked," she said, "but I couldn't keep on the bed when I heard them. Come Mrs. Ogden, you're so strong you can foot it, I know," and the old lady actually seized Grandmother Ogden's reluctant hand and danced down the room.

"I'm a minister's daughter," she said, her cheeks pink, her eyes twinkling and the blue ribbons very rakishly to one side. "But he never said no, when we wanted a contradance, and I believe the wickedness will never get out of my feet."

"I hate fooling," said Mrs. Ogden, "almost in the words of Mr. F.'s aunt."

"It's good for us sometimes," said Grandmother May sinking into an arm-chair and settling her cap. "I had a beautiful nap, Eleanor, and when I waked up, there was that music going and it seemed just as if I could see old Governor Morgan standing at the head of the room. Oh! a very elegant man, my dear, I can tell you, just as he did the night we opened the ball in Hartford; but then I ought not to think of such things, and not far from my end; but then they come of themselves, sometimes. Do you think I'm crazy, my dear?"

"Not a bit of it," I said wondering if Grandmother Ogden had ever opened a ball, and if she would get over this dreadful way of looking as if she felt herself surrounded by lunatics, and must be on her guard. The expression lasted even after Winthrop came. She talked, even smiled faintly at times, but listened to Grandmother May's steady flow, as if she were a detective taking notes, and went to bed at last with the air of having gained valuable information with which to annihilate us on the morrow.

CHAPTER V.

STRIFE AND PEACE.

Sunday passed peacefully enough and Monday came. Before daylight we heard the opening and shutting of doors. Loud voices sounded from the kitchen, and then I heard Tea in Mrs. Ogden's room, and a general commotion; Grandmother May called from her door, "There ain't anything afire is there?" and Winthrop shouted, "no! go to sleep again, grandmother!" through the keyhole.

Katy's face was one of anguish when I went into the kitchen, and by the washtub stood Grandmother Ogden in a calico sack and skirt well up to her ankles and of unheard-of ugliness, scrubbing away furiously.

"Don't do that, I beg of you," I said.

"How can you? Katy is a good washer and perfectly able to do all you need."

"I ain't going, at my time of life, to wash any day but Monday," Mrs. Ogden said, wiping the suds from her arms and turning upon me. "Your help said, when I came down, Tuesday was the day, and I said 'I ain't a fool and none of your Toosdays for me.' I'm well aware the ways of this house is all new fangled ones, and its my business to put up with them, but wash Toosday I won't and shan't."

"As you please," I said, quietly as rising indignation would let me. "I prefer Tuesday because I have found it best. Sunday always makes a good deal of work, and I have found a quiet Monday just the thing for straightening everything for the week. We rub the silver or do any needed baking or sweeping, and put the clothes in soak. It can't make much difference to you?"

"A girl with any spring would do the whole in one day."

"That may be, though it seems to me that washing and the necessary cleaning which follows, is quite enough for one day's work."

"Tain't for me—I could do the whole of your work myself, and I'm ready to. A house like this with every convenience and a laz trollop of a girl reading Bayard Taylor's Travels, before breakfast! I'd travel her!"

"It was only one minute when I was dusting the parlour end," sighed Katy.

"The parlour end, I should think," Mrs. Ogden said sternly. "A pretty pass things have come to when decent kitchens have to have 'parlour ends,' and my cherry wood table with a drawer that I bought at old Mr. Deering's sale, with a cloth on it, and a book shelf and picture over it, and my lady in her rocking chair at the 'parlour end.' She'd better be scrubbing the kitchen stairs!"

"She's boiling her stockings in the farina boiler," said Katy with the calm of despair, and beckoning me into the hall. "I told her I'd get the wash-boiler, but she ain't willing. She said I could boil eggs in it if I was a mind to, but she chose things suitable for size, and wasn't going to boil stockings in a thing a mile deep."

"Now this is too much!" I said hastily. "I cannot allow clothes to be boiled in anything we use in preparing food. Wash all you wish if it's any pleasure to you, but please use only the things intended for that purpose."

"You mean to say, do you, that my stockings are going to dirty your tin so't can't be cleaned?"

"Yes, ma'am, I should never dream of doing such a thing myself, and why should you who are such a particular housekeeper?"

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Grandmother Ogden looked at me and laughed; a detestable laugh, which made the blood rush to my cheeks. Then she carefully took out every piece, closed the tubs, put on an old hat of Winthrops, lifted the farina-kettle from the range and walked out of the kitchen door.

"What do you want to do?" I asked.

"I'm going where I can do my washing to suit myself. I guess Tea won't drive me out of his house."

"But I don't drive you out. I want you to do what pleases you, only not with the farina boiler."

Grandmother Ogden was far up the path before I ended.

"She's taken away the funny little three-legged iron pot," moaned Katy, "that we like so much, and the big spider. She says she may want to cook something in her own room sometimes, and she wants to know about the old tins you gave Tea's wife. She remembered every one, and says we've got to pay for them."

"Who does this house belong to?" I said, rushing into Winthrop. "Your grandmother claims at least half of everything in it."

"Why she did get a good deal I believe," said Winthrop uneasily. "I wasn't here, but I know father let her run the house for a while just to please her. Get new things if she wants the old, only don't have any fuss over it. She is used to such prudent, careful living that I dare say we do seem recklessly extravagant. Give her her head all you can. She's old, and can't have it long."

"It's too small to talk about at all. Everything seems so petty, and yet we must have a definite understanding."

"Have it, then, only quietly," answered Winthrop a little irritably. I remembered my theory that household worries were distinctly my sphere, and was silent. Whatever else happened, she should not cast even a shadow between Winthrop and me. How could there be an understanding, though, when, once for all, apparently, she had taken the ground that I and my modes of work were alike silly and wrong.

"I will not be cross, I will be patient," I said to myself; "I may be old and hateful by-and-bye;" but when Norma Annette came down to say that Mrs. Ogden had had her breakfast and we need not save any, philosophy fled again, and I looked at Winthrop darkly and desperately.

"Take it easy, little wife," he said as he kissed me good-bye. "Don't let her fret you. Use your surplus energy in putting the other G. in order."

I went up stairs listlessly. To begin the day with a passion was demoralizing, and I

wanted to run away to the woods or anywhere where peace and stillness ruled. Grandmother May sat helplessly before her trunks as I reluctantly went in.

"Such beautiful closet room," she said. "Shelves and drawers and all, and a big bureau, and here I can't tell where I want a thing, nor where it is. I want everything where I can lay my hand on it any time, and how I'm to remember, in a new place, unless I have a string on my finger, but then every finger wouldn't begin to be enough for all of them. 'Tisn't as if I had a family and had to know in case anybody was scalded; but then there might be a scald here, and there's beautiful old linen somewhere. Mrs. Whitcomb packed for me. She said I wasn't fit, and I wasn't."

"Then you don't know where the things are any better than I do? I'm glad of it, because now we will take one trunk at a time, if you don't mind, and just settle as we go. Then we shall both know, and if you are sick it will be so much easier to find what you want. Shall I, or had you rather do it alone?"

"No, indeed; I'll be only too glad of help. My hands shake, and the grasshopper has become a burden; but then why shouldn't it at seventy-four; but then think of old lady Ogden! My heart! To think how she flies round now. She'll kill herself. I don't know what you'll think of so many duds, but I always thought I couldn't see when I was old, and I'd sew enough to last, so nobody need be troubled."

"But there are things here that have never been worn, quantities," I said in astonishment, as I piled after pile of exquisitely made underclothing came from the great trunk. "Why it is all done by hand! I don't wonder you were afraid you might lose your eyesight. These stitches are next to invisible."

"I meant they should be," said the old lady with pride; "I'm no friend to machine work, I can tell you. Not but that they're useful in a large family, though I did for my seven and they had plenty too. But then we weren't in such a hurry then. We took time and enjoyed ourselves. Now there are towels I spun myself, and a few my mother did. It's a mercy they were all saved; but then I could have got along if they hadn't been, and Nobbs' most killed himself getting out things from the house. He said he wouldn't let anything burn he could get hold of. Now there's that embroidery, I don't believe there's any nun's work any better, if I did do it. I loved it."

She held up a white dress of finest lawn, made with long pointed cape and ruffles everywhere all edged with daintiest lace work.

"I wouldn't let it wear out," she said. "I always did it up myself, and it's been laid by for years. I don't know why except that your dear grandfather courted me in that dress, and always wanted me to wear white. He couldn't realize I was getting a silly old woman. Dear heart! He'd be over ninety now. See this gold-coloured brocade? That was mother's, and I brought it for tableaux. You'd never think the times it has been lent. We'd better leave it in the trunk, hadn't we?"

So the old lady wandered on, a story for everything and work lagged as I listened. By lunch time, however, we had accomplished a great deal. Tea carried two empty trunks to the attic, and Grandmother May came down murmuring.

"Upper drawer, caps and muslins; second one, stockings and underclothes; third one, skirts. It'll be a blessing if I can remember. Upper drawer, caps and collars. There! I won't keep saying it like an old parrot. If I don't remember I can hunt. I've nothing else to do, but then I ought to have—and to think Mrs. Ogden, there you are, and never came to breakfast. I do think you shouldn't work so."

"My washing is done and pretty much all the ironing," said Grandmother Ogden triumphantly, "and I've got the afternoon to sort things some. People ain't what they used to be. There's lazy shif'less ways everywhere, and of all the shif'lessness ever I saw, Tea's wife does beat. I gave her a good piece of my mind this morning. There's that Normy, and of all the heathenish names, and she doesn't do a stroke and going on seven. When I was seven I washed every dish and stood on a cricket to pound clothes, and made bed-quilts and knit stockings, and didn't have an idle minute. You needn't tell me folks are better off now. I know better."

"The fathers have eaten the sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," I said involuntarily, "if our grandmothers had not worked so intensely, there would have been more strength to give the next generation. They were only a remove or two from stout English stock, and had not given into this wearing and exacting climate. They used up the muscles and left us only nerves."

"You're talking Greek for all me," said Grandmother Ogden, "Folks that are a mind to work can work, and folks that ain't, won't. When I've got to stop I'm ready to die. I've got to work every day, and you'd better say now El'ner what you want done, for do I must. I'd as soon clean house."

"The house is cleaned and ready for summer."

Mr. Ogden's eyebrows went up, and she sniffed.

"I shouldn't have thought so; but if 'tis, 'tis. I'll make the beds then and see to the rooms."

"Very well," I said, thinking this would be better than interfering with Katy's routine, and with but faint idea of what it might involve. Grandmother May looked disturbed.

"I don't suppose you ever thought what a good for nothing old body I was," she said. "I'll do anything in the world you want done, Eleanor, but everything looks so nice it seems as if it all came so without any trouble; but then I know it doesn't, and I've done a sight in my life, but then I do love not to fuss. I'm twenty years older than Mrs. Ogden this very minute."

"It's because you've always been coddled and I haven't," returned Grandmother Ogden in better humour than I had yet seen her. "I don't know as I told you, El'ner, that down to church yesterday, I saw Mrs. Ward and a good many of my intimate friends, and they said they should come up right away. Mrs. Ward says she called on you and liked you very well, but you never seemed in any hurry to return them; and Mrs. Crane says you have the name of being very stiff."

"It won't limber her to tell her that," said Grandmother May. "Seems to me it's just as well not to tell what folks say, because they say too much and generally don't know anything about it. I guess Eleanor isn't stiff," and she beamed upon me over her tea-cup.

"It is perfectly true that I am not social," I said; "I have never had anything to do with that sort of life; and cannot make myself like to have my day spoiled by people I care nothing about. There is so much to do, and I am growing old enough now to have the hours seem more precious than they used to."

"I don't just remember your age. You're considerable older'n Winthrop, ain't you," said Mrs. Ogden suavely. Grandmother May opened her eyes. "Dear heart!" she said. "Why you haven't looked at her through your glasses yet. She's ten years younger'n Winthrop. Winthrop takes after his father. He's growing old young."

"Well he ain't too old for all sorts of foolishness yet," said Mrs. Ogden rising and putting the remaining butter on her plate back on the butter-dish. "I'm going to mend this afternoon, El'ner, and if I'm wanted I can be called."

"She's a very stirring woman," said Grandmother May, as she whisked from the room despondently. "I couldn't ever be equal to her."

"I implore you never to dream of trying," I said sitting down by her. "Two stirrers would leave nothing of me. You are so little

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and madam, and minded in a minute, but
they petted me for all. I've always been a
silly body, but then God has been very good
to me. I've never quarrelled with folks and
it's too late to begin."

"Didn't you ever detest anybody and want
to get far out of their way as you could?"

"I like some better than others," returned
Grandmother May guardedly; "but I can
get along with almost anybody. It's best not
to let folks' doings trouble you. Rise right
above it and you'll feel better. *Rest* in the Lord,
it says; not fret, and fuss and worry, but *rest*;
but then everybody can't have the same way,
and I expect I fret fo'ks most to death some-
times, but then I don't mean to."

"Bless your heart! I'm sure of that!" I
said, but grandmother May did not hear.
She had picked up "My Daughter Elinor,"
and was looking at it delightedly.

"I don't know but what you'll think it
wicked," she said, "but I do love a good
story, and I wouldn't tell everybody, but I
read a sight of novels; but then I read a
sight of sermons too. All my blessed father's,
that I know most by heart, and Scott's
Commentaries, and Edward's, but then I
don't know as they're enough to balance
some awful ones I didn't mean to read but
couldn't help it when I once got going.

"Cometh up as a flower!" My heart! I
wouldn't let a daughter of mine read it; but
then I couldn't help crying over it. Now
I'll lie down with the book awhile and you're
not to think a word about me. I'm always
in my room a great deal. And I know you're
not used to folks about all the time. I've
got one friend Elinor, I haven't told you
about, and I'm afraid you'll think it's dread-
ful."

Grandmother May drew from her pocket a
small silver box marked L. M., and opening
it showed a vanilla bean imbedded in a dark
powder.

"It's my blessed father's snuff-box," she
said, "and I began with just smelling the
bean and sneezing myself most to pieces if I
got a mite of the snuff with it, and father
used to say, 'Now Sibbil, don't you ever
get into such a habit, for it holds you firm
when you do, and I'd break off if I could.'"

I never thought of such a thing; but all at
once there I was taking a pinch every day,
and now I don't suppose I could stop any-
more than I could fly. You're ashamed of
me, ain't you? There! you needn't say a
word, I see in your face you don't like
it, but then it shan't trouble you, I promise
you."

"My face has a bad habit of telling tales,"
I said, "but I can't honestly say that I do.
All that I know about snuff taking is the
"dippers" in South Carolina. Oh! those
horrid women and their yellow mouths!
That dainty old box seems very different."

"I drop it round sometimes," said Grand-
mother May anxiously, "and that did put
Mrs. Whitcomb out; but then it's good for
moths; but then I oughtn't to make that an
excuse. Anyway it's my vice. Everybody
has something, but then I've got a great
many," and she trotted off as if all the com-
mandments could rise up against her if they
would.

Quite calm and self-possessed, I de-
cided now would be a good time
to call on Grandmother Ogden, and
without waiting for deliberation I ran up
and tapped at the door. She looked sur-
prised as I answered her "come in," but
pulled forward a rocking chair and began to
talk at once upon the weather. Evidently,
on her own ground she had some theory of
civility, and I was amused to find her
actually entertaining me as though I were a
bashful caller and must be encouraged.

The "picters" referred to by Tea had
been brought out and hung; one a gaunt and
wooden woman with short waist and high
comb and an expression of grim determina-
tion which emanated from the whole figure
in spite of the abominable painting. The
other was evidently by an able hand; a
child's head with closed eyes and pinched
and suffering face.

"That's Wiuthrop's sister," she said, fol-
lowing my eyes, "taken after death, and the
large one is my sister Sophia. She was a
master hand for work, but she died of an
eating cancer before she was fifty."

"How can you bear it," I asked; "that
child's face is dreadful. It is bad as a ghost
in the room."

Mrs. Ogden looked at me with displeased
astonishment.

"I'm thankful to say I haven't any such
feelings," she said; "I don't see what there
is out of the way."

"Ugly, unpleasant, harrowing things have
no business to exist," I said, forgetting my
auditor and carried out of myself by the
night-mare like effect of the two faces; "I'd
burn those pictures if they were mine, and
scatter the ashes so that no chance of re-

surrection might ever come fo such hideous forbidding things. "I'd—"

"I don't doubt you'd be glad to burn them and me with them," said Mrs. Ogden bitterly, "But you won't have a chance very soon. I can't please you by saying I feel like breaking down, and till I do, you ain't going to touch them if I have to sit up nights."

"Now I have done it," I said desperately. "I didn't mean that I should or would, I only meant they were unpleasint to me personally. Some might like them. Why will you think all the time that I want to go against you? Why won't you take things as I mean, and be peaceable?"

Mrs. Ogden rose rigidly.

"I mean," I cried, "I want you to be comfortable and enjoy life. I don't want you to think we are all trying to make you unhappy. We want to have you have everything you want. Take all your things and fix them any way you want, only do be comfortable."

If an evil spirit had stood behind, prompting every word I doubt if the effect could have been more disastrous.

"Eleanor Ogden," the old lady said, "I didn't come here to be insulted, though I know you're glad enough to do it. As long as I am here I shall look out for my grandson's interests whether you like it or not, and I shall do what I can to save his property from destruction. I am friend enough to you to speak my mind when it's necessary, and if you don't like it I can't help it. I've some rights still in this house."

"I intended you shall have all you are entitled to," I said. "Now Grandmother Ogden do let us be friends. Take all your own things so that you need not feel we are spoiling them, and then do consent to be comfortable."

"I'll take my things," she answered, every wrinkle filled with uncompromising hostility, "yes, I'll take them and leave as soon as I can. I'll ask Winthrop where I had better go, and then go."

"But nobody wants you to go," I said, quite beside myself. "This is your home and all we want is peace."

"You shall have it soon," said Mrs. Ogden turning from me and taking up her mending. I went out. This dreary persistency was something I could not meet. In the house only three days and now such a rupture. Winthrop could not think it anything but my own fault, and how was it to be settled. I walked up the garden path to the orchard, where Tea was busy about the apple trees and stood watching him.

"You ain't so chipper as common, be ye," he said presently looking at me from under

his eyebrows. "Seems to me you kind of dragged along. Old lady's too much for ye, ain't she?"

"She says she is going away, Tea," I said abjectly, "and I don't know how to stop her. I've tried to make her feel better."

"Now don't you fret," Tea said looking with real concern at me. "That's the tune she always sings when things don't suit, but she don't never go. Many's the time she has come out to me and said, 'Tea, I'm going to-morrow, and you can come in and help me pack my things,' but she never goes. My sakes, if women folks ain't the contrariest. No wonder there screaming for their rights. Gracious knows they do wrongs enough, an' there oughter be a right stuck in somewhere. Women can't hitch horses. They will fight."

"You are mistaken, Tea, there is no fight. I mean that there need be none, I am not complaining."

"Jest so," said Tea dryly, "I saw there wasn't no trouble, an was jes sort of congratulating you. Come Mis' Winthrop! I'm old enough to be your father, an' you can't scare me with no manners that ever was. There ain't a woman's trick I ain't up to. I've hed four, an' what one hadn't another had. Jest you steer pretty clear o' the old lady an' you'll do. She's a good friend to me, but it takes calculation to know what's comin' an' dander ain't no use. Give her her head."

"How can anybody give her more than she takes already," I thought, turning back encouraged in spite of myself. The sound of the door bell stopped further consideration of my problem, Grandmother Ogden appeared and met her old acquaintances with such a mildness and meekness of manner, such appearance of suffering and misunderstood innocence, that I looked at her in amazement. Evidently I had two distinct people to deal with, and the alphabet of life with her was yet to be learned.

CHAPTER VI.

FANNY.

Nothing more was said of leaving, and at the end of a fortnight life seemed to have adjusted itself as it was likely to remain. Grandmother Ogden rose with the dawn, and did Heaven only knows what in her room till breakfast time, though judging merely by sound, I should say her personal property, trunks and tables included, was shaken out of the window and set back in place with a thump. After breakfast, I knew more about it. Grandmother May was declared too feeble to make her own bed properly, and in her room and mine Mrs. Ogden flew about for an hour or two

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with an energy positively unearthly. Blankets and sheets waved from every window, Mattresses bounced out on the piazza roof, were pounded and shaken fiercely and bounced back again. Everything that could be moved, moved. Everything that could not, was attacked beneath with a long-handled brush, and made to give out the last reluctant and clinging particle of dust, and even the boldest moth could find no spot for retirement and peaceful following out of its own line of life.

This crusade had it disadvantages for me, for by its means my internal resources came to be known far better than I wished. The bureau drawers came out because there might be dust at the back, and their contents were duly noted. My closet shelves were attacked for the same reason, and every box and bundle carefully examined. Nothing escaped till, when one morning, I discovered her at my desk shaking out papers and letters, and dusting its most sacred recesses, I locked it and both bureaus then and there, and asserted my intention of caring for them myself. My beloved linen room, my pride and delight, odorously with lavender and dried rose-leaves, she invaded in an unguarded hour when the key had been left in the door, and I found her counting sheets and pillow-cases and testing the quality of napkins and tablecloths. I could not well carry a jingling bunch of keys, and yet she found their most secret hiding places, by an instinct, not so much curiosity, as the feeling that she had perfect and undoubted right to full knowledge of whatever went on in the house, and any attempt to balk her was fraud and outrage. We had no personal encounters. She seemed to have made up her mind to say as little as possible to me. We preserved a species of armed neutrality, and yet I was conscious that she watched keenly and constantly, and knew my life in all its outward aspects, from my hours for reading or practising down to the contents of my bundle and rag-bags, quite as well as myself.

It was not in one week or many that I learned to tolerate this. I had determined not to complain to Winthrop, but there were many times when in talking or reading together, I heard a faint rustle, and went to the door just in time to see her retreating figure. Often, leaning partly over the stairs, she said as she saw me unexpectedly appear,

"Oh! I was just looking down, I thought I heard the cat."

There were times when I burned to answer, "You are the cat yourself! a miserable, sneaking listener," but did succeed in keeping still.

Katy's life had become a burden to her. Her room was searched openly, and loud proclamation made of the degree of dirt each raid disclosed. "The help" was a creature having no rights anybody was bound to respect, and at last I had to declare distinctly that no one was to enter her quarters but myself and the owner. This stopped open proceedings, but private ones went on, until the only resource was to lock the door and pocket the key. So with books. The "parlour end," as the south window in the kitchen had been dubbed, had its own little shelf of books which Katy used as she found time. One by one these disappeared, till Winthrop himself brought them from Mrs. Ogden's room, and told her they were never to be taken from this place.

As for Grandmother May she settled at once into a routine which fully met my idea of an old lady's life. She rose just in time for breakfast, and not a minute before, and ate it placidly, talking every spare instant, whether anybody could listen or not. Then the morning papers, every item in them, from congressional news up and down.

Newspapers, I found, were her passion. She took two religious weeklies; had the town and county papers of her old home, and nothing pleased her better than a Post or Evening Mail, brought specially to her and presented with due ceremony. Her room looked like an editor's den. She fairly absorbed newspapers, and resented, far as her gentle nature admitted such a feeling, the destruction of a single one. She vibrated between the different parties like a pendulum, taking the colour of the last leader. Democratic at nine, Republican at ten. Murders, fires, deaths of great people and deaths of small; the last new barn in Windham county, and the completion of the Washington monument were all alike interesting. Each day brought more than she could possibly attend to. She turned over the "novel shelf" on my book rack with ever fresh delight. No mouse rejoiced more in a new cheese than she in a new story. The characters for the time being were her intimate friends. She saw startling resemblances between them and some one she had known, and talked of her friends and of the last hero or heroine, so indiscriminately, that Grandmother Ogden was confounded at the extent and character of her acquaintance, and could never understand the distinction to be made.

In spite of her seventy-four years Grandmother May was in many ways still a child. Sweet natured and amiable, she had been petted and guarded through her whole life. With its dark side she had little to do, and shrank from searching out a why for even the limited amount of evil that had come under

her own observation. There must have been French blood from some remote ancestor, for many traits of that much-abused people showed daily. She loved dainty living; delicate food delicately served and eaten with slow, deliberate enjoyment. Gay colours, flowers, bright ribbons, sunshine were essential elements of her daily life, and yet with the sensuous side, was the Yankee common sense, genuine thrift and economy. And blending with the whole, a lovely religious faith, in which her life seemed to rest and abide. It seemed as if such a nature ought to react on the troubled, peevish, sad old mind of Grandmother Ogden, but the latter for a long time saw only the frivolous side, and regarded her as a hopelessly worldly old lady.

The barriers were gradually broken down. Grandmother May delighted in personal details of every sort, and was a genuine though harmless gossip. Also she had a true New England faith in medicine. The little table by her bed bristled with bottles. Camphor and ginger for faintness; cherry pectoral for colds; arnica and oil for possible rheumatism, and unnumbered pills and powders. A pale face or poor appetite was an immediate passport to her sympathies, and she prescribed doses enough to ruin the best constitution.

Grandmother Ogden suffered often from what she called "a sinking," due wholly to the fact, that in that in the hope of saving Winthrop some expense she ate at times barely enough to keep soul and body together. Grandmother May kept a keen watch upon these attacks, trotted back and forth with ginger and whiskey, and asked with such unaffected interest every morning if she felt any easier at her stomach, that I had not the heart to beg her to make her medical inquiries in private. A curious sort of friendship grew up at last between them, and often I heard the steady hum of voices from one room or another.

Once a day I called on each one, generally after lunch, that no feeling of neglect might trouble them. Grandmother Ogden received me usually with severe politeness, but as Grandmother May came finally at the same time full of the last disaster in the newspaper or novel world in which she moved, Grandmother Ogden unbent enough to sigh over the wickedness of things in general, and announce that nothing was as it used to be. Occasionally I coaxed the two to ride, but neither really enjoyed it. Grandmother May shivered if out door air struck her, and said she felt she must take care of herself and not take cold. She had a series of small shawls graded in thickness to meet the different temperatures encountered, and she

urged them upon Grandmother Ogden, undisturbed by the stern rejection which immediately ensued. The highest winds were never too high for a rush of the former up to Tea's or down to the office. A spirit of furious energy encompassed Grandmother Ogden and made rest impossible, and I grew more and more thankful for the dear, loving old soul, whose life went by so easily and peacefully.

With May came Fanny, my pretty Fanny, whose face was perpetual refreshment. She took in the situation at once; fell in love with Grandmother May and treated Grandmother Ogden with distinguished consideration, which that lady was doubtful whether to resent as sarcasm or receive as merely her due. Katy bowed down before her, spent much valuable time and made herself look like a distracted Skye terrier, crimping her hair in a wild imitation of Fanny's fluffy curls. Tea succumbed at once, and would have risen at midnight to harness Prince had she wished it. Norma Annette followed her admiringly, and even the wizened baby felt the charm and smiled in baby-like fashion into her bonny brown eyes. If Fanny was not pretty she was irresistible, and that is better. She fitted into the family life immediately, and in a week it seemed as if she had always been there. We had doubled in numbers, and yet there seemed but little more to do, as each one had assumed certain duties. Grandmother May shook her head plaintively.

"I'm like a flower of the field," she said. "I toil not neither do I spin; but then I did spin in my time, and I could again if there was any call for it; but then nobody'd thank me. I might dust the parlour. Wouldn't you like me to, Eleanor? I know you always say 'no,' and I might knock over something, but then I could if you liked. You mustn't let Fanny do too much. Seems to me she looked a little yellow this morning; just a mite. She ought to have camomile. That's very wholesome in the spring, and the thoroughwort is too; but then she don't like it she says. She ought to take it. I'm sure you're a little mite yellow, Fanny."

"Of course I am," Fanny said, "standing right by you Grandmother May, and your sinful, corn-coloured ribbons, fairly dazzling my eyes. It's all a reflection from them. Soak them in camomile if you like, but not me."

"But I must look after your health, my child. I'm sure you need something, and Eleanor doesn't know about feebleness; but then you fly around so, you'll wear yourself out."

"Come into New York with us to day and I'll take a pint of herb tea if you like."

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Grandmother May shrank back behind the table as if something must be put at once between herself and such a desperate thought. Nothing in all the great city had thus far had attraction enough to make her cross the dreaded ferry and enter that realm of murders, fires, garroters, and pickpockets. That she had passed through it and yet reached us in full possession of life, senses and property, was a Providential preservation, and she marvelled at our running in and out, as if we headed a forlorn hope at every trip.

Fifty years before, on her wedding journey, she had spent a week there: boarded at a private house on Broad-street, gone to church at old Trinity, and ridden out into the country about what is now Tenth-street. Canal was then far up town, and that she had come in at Forty-Second-street, and passed through a mile or two of houses before reaching our ferry, was a sort of miracle, to be accepted but not understood. Mrs. Ogden, on the contrary, had spent most of her life there, after her son's marriage, and knew the old-fashioned, east-side portion by heart, though up town, meaning to her anywhere above Ninth-street, was almost unknown ground. She was of the large class who, born and brought up in the city, yet know it only in the phase which touches their own life. She had heard of the Astor Library, but never seen it, and also that there was a place called Goupil's to which Winthrop and his father went, but she had no time to spare. Central Park she had visited with country relatives who must be taken somewhere, that and Greenwood being the cheapest form of entertainment, and she had taken Winthrop to Barnum's old Museum.

"What do you go for?" she asked one day. "I shouldn't suppose you'd need all the time you take to shop."

"No, I do not shop except when I can't help it," I answered. "I go to Goupil's, and Schaus's, and Sypher's, and Collamore's and Tiffany's, and the Metropolitan Museum. Anywhere I can see some of the beautiful things always ready for you in New York. I love New York. I go to walk up Broadway and look in store windows."

"The biggest gawk on earth couldn't do worse'n that," returned Grandmother Ogden severely. "When I've got to go anywhere, I go and get through."

"I don't," said Fanny; "I never get through if I can help it. Broadway is equal to hashesh."

"Better than hash!" What do you mean, child," said Grandmother May, whose deaf ear had been turned towards us. "To be sure it is a sort of hash, foreigners and

all, and murderers and villains walking right by your side, and you never knowing it; but then the Lord is good, and leads silly sheep where they haven't any business to be by themselves. It's taking your life in your hand the way you go in and out, I do think."

"Be a silly sheep too. Come with us just once," pleaded Fanny. "You love flowers so, and you don't know how beautiful the florists' windows are. Why not all of us go to the Park to-day? think of hyacinths and all spring flowers and swans, and then come."

"If I could be there, I'd go in a minute; but that ferry," said Grandmother May, much as if she did wish she could. "No; I won't go till I have to, when I make a journey, and that will be following the line of my duty, and I shall be protected. You go, and Grandmother Ogden and I will keep house."

"You'd better go with me when you do go," said Mrs. Ogden with an expression I could not understand. "Young folks drag old folks round anyway. We'll go some time and take care of ourselves. I know the city, every inch of it, a good deal better than Eleanor there, that couldn't find Madison-street the other day."

"It was worth being lost," said Fanny. "We never in the world should have seen Division-street and the million milliners if we hadn't been. I almost bought one of the bonnets. And the German Jews on Grand-street! It's like another world. There's nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world."

"There are plenty of people quite as respectable as you are that ain't ashamed to live there," said Mrs. Ogden; "and with money laid by too, and ain't ashamed to go to market, and that keeps silk dresses for Sunday. Not much like your Fifth-Avenue and the wickedness and show and throwing money to the dogs, and your silks and your satins dragging after you in the mud and mire. I wonder a judgment doesn't come, and it will, I can tell you that. Calico for morning and a clean one for afternoon, or an alpaca; that's what I say, and no long tails after me wiping up the floors!"

"But you don't know how nice you'd look in a long dress," said Fanny, eyeing her critically. "You've a very good figure indeed, Mrs. Ogden, if you are so thin, and I could make you look real stylish. This calico is so horrid. Why won't you get a pretty one? There are pretty ones."

"Pretty ones!" repeated Mrs. Ogden aghast. "And that wears like iron and washes good as new every time! You'd have me wear one

all over pink rosebuds, I suppose, and flowers in my cap. I'm able to dress myself yet, I thank you, and when I can't, it'll be time to talk about your pinks and your yellows! I never!"

"Let me buy you a pretty lilac one," said Fanny undismayed. "Nice little cool stripes and a white cap with lilac ribbon. You'd look ten years younger. You were a pretty girl, I know, and you ought to look prettier now."

Grandmother Ogden was dumb. This must be insolence and not interest, and silence was the best mode of meeting the uncertain state of things.

Grandmother May laughed.

"Young folks do as they're a mind to," she said, "and we have to do as they want us to; but then we made them mind once, and it's only fair they should have their turn. The sky is blue and the grass is green, and I'm sure I don't know why we should go mourning all our days in blacks and browns. It doesn't match. Not that I'd want a pink like Tea's wife wears. It's a dreadful pink, if I do say it; but then, poor thing, she doesn't know what's a good colour and what isn't."

"That's a piece I bought myself," said Grandmother Ogden; "and it's the only light colour that washes fit to be seen. Shiftless thing, and the chicken-pail full o' pancakes! No wonder Tea can't lay up a thing. There's enough thrown away here to keep a pig well."

"We don't want a pig," I said unguardedly. "We don't eat pork."

"I rather guess I could be allowed to have a pig if I was a mind to pay for one," said Mrs. Ogden. "He'd fat on the waste of this house, and more too, and I'd double all the cost when he was killed. I sha'n't do without pork and beans come winter. What was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us."

"The only good of a pig is to scratch their backs," said Fanny meditatively. "Do get one, Mrs. Ogden, for there's nothing more fascinating than a white pig and lots of straw and a curly tail, and scratch their backs with a stick and just enjoy their perfect bliss while you're doing it."

"I believe this generation is as crazy as loons," said Mrs. Ogden, backing away as if Fanny were an escaped lunatic. "I hope I know myself better than to touch a pig till it comes to salting down, and I ain't afraid to do that with anybody. Seems to me if you're going you'd better be starting."

Tea looked admiringly at Fanny as we went out.

"Don't you let no gay young man run off with ye, Miss Walton," he said as we left

the carriage. "We calkilate to hold on to ye a spell yet. Young men is mostly fools, and you ought to know it in time."

Fanny's eyes twinkled as, going towards the train, she met those of our village dandy, looking rather red and conscious from a sense that Tea's remark might be considered personal.

"I'm in no immediate danger," she said, "from any specimen yet exhibited. All the nice men are married, or killed in the war, I think. But then I'm never sure I know them."

"It is morally impossible to know any man unless you marry him, Fanny, and I'm doubtful if even then. Don't answer. We are too near the engine. Save your energy for New York, and I'll expound the whole subject to you when we are in a quiet place."

CHAPTER VII.

THE FUGITIVES.

Tea met me at the appointed time, and lingered after we had taken our places till the last passenger had left, and the whistle sounded from the next station.

"Mr. Ogden cannot come until a quarter past seven, Tea," I said, "so you need not wait."

"Oh! well, then, he'll bring the old ladies, I suppose?" Tea said, giving Prince the faintest touch of the whip.

"What do you mean? We do not expect any old ladies."

"There! I knew you didn't know they was going," said Tea triumphantly. "An' I told Mis' Fuller so when I went to dinner. Says I, 'them two old ladies has gone off unbeknownst, and old Mis' Ogden let on to me they were going to meet you and go to the Park.' I mistrusted it wasn't reg'lar, and I says to Mis'—"

She'll kill Grandmother May," said Fanny solemnly. "We had better go right back".

"You can't. The next train doesn't leave for nearly an hour; just at the time Winthrop will get here. I don't see how she did it. Grandmother May wouldn't come with us. What shall we do?"

"If Mis' Ogden took it into her head to take the barn along," said Tea, "she an' the barn'd go an' come home too. You can't hurt her, an' she'll look after Mis' May. It does beat all. Gabriel himself couldn't stop her. She'd take him right off his feet an' she'd whisk little Mis' May to the moon any time. Like as not she'll come in the horse-cars. You can't tell what she'll do."

"Mr. Ogden will know what is best to do," I said. "There's no use in worrying. Drive home, Tea."

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Grandmother Ogden's door was locked, but that was not surprising, as she always locked it when leaving the house, even if for only ten minutes. In Grandmother May's room a whole wardrobe lay upon the bed, as if she had debated what array best suited such an occasion. As we looked, Katy appeared with red eyes and a dejected expression.

"She wore her second-best black silk, ma'am," she said, "and shawls and her velvet cape. She was scared most to death, but Mrs. Ogden just made her. She said, 'Now, Mis' May, don't you be afraid of what'll be said. We'll come home early and get a good cup of tea, and it will take them down considerably to think we can go round alone.' I said, 'I know Mrs. Winthrop will feel bad, and she told me I hadn't anything to say about it. I asked if she wouldn't leave word where they were going, and she marched away and never answered. Do you believe they are lost?'"

"I don't know, Katy. They are too old to go alone. They ought to have been stopped."

"I'd sooner try to stop a locomotive engine then?" exclaimed Katy. "I'm so scared when she begins to look at me I could drop down. She takes all my strength. I never saw no such person. Don't you know I couldn't stop her? I've been crying because I thought most likely she'd kill Mrs. May. Do you?"

"I'll ride down again," said Fanny, "and then if Winthrop thinks we had better, I can go right in. The trains pass one another there, don't they?"

Fanny ran out and I followed, too worried to stay quietly and wait. Winthrop was there with John Wiider his partner, and only waiting to get the main fact, jumped on to the return train and was off, while we held a council on the depot steps.

"The horse-cars run every half hour, don't they?" said John. "Well, Tea had better stay at the foot of the hill at the corner where they would get out, the hill is so hard to climb."

"That is the trouble. There are two corners; the foot of the hill on each side, and we get out just as it happens."

"Very well. Tea shall guard one, and I'll run down to the other whenever a car is due. What larks for the two old ladies. I should expect it of Mrs. Ogden, but I thought the other one was a quiet and peaceable body who stayed at home."

"So she does, bless her!" said Fanny fervently. "Only if anybody is taken up by a tornado, why they are taken up, and that is the end of it. It would be swimming against Niagara, to oppose Mrs. Ogden—that is for anybody like Mrs. May. I could do

it; though, after all I don't know. She paralyzes me at times and might hale me off if she only knew it. The thing is never to let her know. I beg your pardon, Eleanor. She is a remarkable woman."

"John knows her," I said. "You need not apologize. I believe they get on excellently together."

"On Miss Walton's theory," said John, looking at her with bright, amused eyes. "I have always been in mortal terror of her, but disguised it with impertinence, and she doesn't know. Really, I can manage her better than a inthrop. He always gave in. What do you suppose they can be doing?"

This question with variations lasted the whole evening. Mr. Wilder vibrated between the house and the foot of the hill, Winthrop returning with him at his eleven o'clock trip looking pale and worried.

"I took a carriage," he said, "and went to the three places she sometimes visits; the only ones I know anything about. She had been at none of them, and I left word to telegraph here at once if she did come. Then I drove to the nine-forty train, thinking they might be on that; but they were not. Went to nearest station-house then and left description and instructions to telegraph, and came out in the next. There is the midnight train still to come, and two more horse-cars, but it is raining fast. They must be locked up when you go away again."

"Come and eat some supper now," I said, "you are all worn out. We will all have some tea with you."

Half-past eleven no grandmothers. Twelve, and the same result. Tea came home to rest, but was to go down again at one, though Prince neighed in protest and seemed dazed at this new order of things.

"It is senseless to keep the whole family up," I said. "Do go to bed. I can attend to them when they come."

"No, indeed," said John. "I would not miss the entrance for the world. Depend upon it they have taken the wrong train or something, and there is really nothing to worry about."

Nevertheless the time dragged, and it was with deep relief that at last, through the steadily falling rain, we heard the sound of wheels, and a carriage stopped at the door.

"It isn't one," said Fanny. "They haven't come in the train."

Winthrop threw open the door as she spoke, and Grandmother Ogden, erect and composed outwardly, though to the inexperienced observer there were some signs of discomfiture, stood there, while the driver helped out poor little, storm-driven, overwhelmed Grandmother May.

"You see we are able to come and go without you," began Mrs. Ogden.

"I see that you have given us a night of the greatest anxiety," said Winthrop sternly. "Such a night as I will not spend again, grandmother, if I have to keep you locked up."

"Hoity-toity!" began Mrs. Ogden undaunted, but here Grandmother May broke in.

"Don't say a word, Winthrop. You don't feel any worse than I do. If Eleanor isn't too angry and will let me have a little hot tea; I'm chilly 'way into my bones."

"Never mind," I said, as the troubled and tear-stained old face turned towards me. "Don't think any more about it. Go right up stairs and you shall have some tea in bed."

"We had supper in Elizabeth, and I don't want any more this time o' night," said Grandmother Ogden. "I won't say we meant to be this late, but we're here, and there isn't any harm done as far as I can see."

"If you are not tired, we are," said Winthrop, and at this hint the party separated, Grandmother Ogden, though wet and dragged, declining tea or assistance of any sort.

"She's covered with red mud," said Fanny as she watched her toiling up, evidently for once overcome with fatigue. "Shoes and skirts and all. Where have they been?"

Grandmother May proved, to be in the same condition, and her little boots, her pretty black silk and ruffled skirt, were a sight to see.

Once comfortably in bed and drinking hot tea, no power on earth could have kept her still, and sitting on the opposite side of the bed, Fanny and I listened to the story of the day.

"I don't suppose you'll ever forgive me, Eleanor," she began, tears in her eyes again. "It did seem so bad to go when I had declared I wouldn't; but then Mrs. Ogden would do it, and seemed so kind of hurt that I didn't want to, and said she never supposed I'd be willing to go with her that I couldn't hurt her feelings. She said we'd get back to tea, and I thought we'd all have a laugh then to think I really had been. But we hadn't been in the train five minutes before I wished I was home. There was my snuff-box in my other dress pocket, that I got the minute I got up stairs, and had a pinch mud or no mud, and I hadn't my glasses and only one glove, and didn't feel just right anywhere, I'd dressed in such a hurry. And it blew, and the boat teetered one side, and I wouldn't say a word, but I did feel we might go to the bottom any minute. Grandma didn't mind, and she did seem to know just

where to go. She said we'd go to Barclay street and walk up to the Sixth avenue cars and that would save a fare apiece, but my heart! Going in and out under those horses' heads and thousands of men screeching to you to be lively! I skipped like a cricket and thought it was over; but there were more streets 'most as bad, and potato barrels and everything to fall over. Seems to me I never was so thankful to get in a car and sit down; but then it was two or three hours getting up to the Park, or it seemed that. I was kind of faint, and grandma bought some warm molasses cakes of a woman at the gate, and we eat them sitting on a bench and resting, and never in all my life did I eat in a public place like a beggar before; but then in New York it does seem as if you got not to mind anything. Then she called the most singular stage I ever saw, with children and Irish girls, but we did,—yes, we did have a beautiful ride! I don't wonder you wanted me to go, and I forgot about being tired, and did wish the whole world could see the beautiful things the Lord had made, or at any rate, that He had put into men's minds to make. I said New York couldn't be quite so bad when there was such a place in it to realize Him. But then we had to get out, and grandma said I did hate the tunnel so, we'd go home another way where we wouldn't have to smell it and be most choked, and your head splitting with the whistling. I don't know just where we went, but we took cars that went all along by the river miles and miles, and down by shops and shops, and people never stopping going by, till we came to another ferry. 'It's the Newark and New York Ferry,' she said, 'and we're going to Newark and home by horse cars.' So she bought two tickets; she wouldn't let me pay a cent; and we went over and got into a train—there were sights of them there, and I laid back and rested, for it was as easy as an arm-chair. Pretty soon the conductor come along, and he said we'd made a mistake, for that train was another road or something, and didn't stop till we got to Elizabeth. Grandma told him he was imposing upon us, she knew, and he got kind of provoked, and said we'd see. He did help me off at Elizabeth, though, but he wouldn't give any tickets to go back with. There we were, and it was supper-time, and I was faint as could be. So grandma said she knew all about Elizabeth, for she'd been there before, and she'd go and see about a restaurant, and she started across the tracks, a perfect gridiron of tracks, and people hollered out, and there she was and the train right on her. I covered up my eyes, but they said she gave an awful jump and went right before it, and I trembled and shook

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so I didn't want anything any more. She was scared, though she wouldn't say so, and a train came along and we got right in and went back to Newark, and it was after eight then. Grandma said she knew just where she was, and we got into another horse-car. I never want to see another. She said, and I asked her how long it would take, and she said about three quarters of an hour, or may be less, and I shut my eyes and tried not to think about anything, but we banged and jounced till my bones seemed as if they must be splinters. She began to look out, and then she said, 'I want to stop at Myrtle Avenue.' 'There isn't any such avenue,' he said. 'Don't you try to deceive me,' she said, 'I know better.' 'All right,' he said, and walked off. Then pretty soon she said, 'Isn't this a Glenville car?' 'No, it isn't,' he said, 'you're in Belleville, about the end of the route.' She did look then as if she didn't know what to do, and seemed kind of sorry. 'We're going right back,' he said, 'and you can take the right car near the Morris and Essex depot.' Then I spoke and said, 'I am so jounced I can't bear it another minute, and if there's a carriage to be had anywhere I want it.' Mrs. Ogden tried to coax me not to, but I said I *would*, anyway, and would not be hindered. Then she said she knew all about Belleville, and there was a man she knew that had a nice horse and would take us for less than the livery. I said I didn't care whose horse so long as we get home, for you'd all be frightened to death, and I wouldn't have it happen for anything. She didn't say much, and we got out. It was sprinkling some, and I turned my velvet cape inside out, and tied the littlest shawl over my bonnet. I thought from what she said it wasn't but a minute's walk. She couldn't find it anyway, and at last said she'd been with Winthrop one day and they went cross lots; and she was sure she was just at the place. The street lamps shone pretty bright, and there was a place in the fence, and she said that was it, and we got through and went along, and there we were in a ploughed field most up to our knees, and it so dark I didn't know which way to turn. So then I said: 'I never expect to get out of here alive; but if I do, the very first man we meet has got to do something.' Then we kind of waded out, and the good Lord had sent a man, and I just took hold of him and I said: 'You must take us to a livery or I shall die.' You never saw a man so astonished; and I told him how we got there, and he took us into the tavern and set us down, and brought us some lager beer, and I drank it and never said no, and to think of it! All hours of the night and in a lager beer saloon.

I said never would I be caught so again, not unless wild horses took me there; and then we had to wait till a carriage got back from somewhere, and here we are, and, Eleanor, don't you ever leave me alone with old lady Ogden again, for there's no telling what she might do. And coming home, sopped and all and most fainting away. I remembered old Hob Pingree and the way he used to come in and say, 'Mis' May, since last I see your face, I've been through scenes and unseens,' and I laughed out, and that made Mrs. Ogden feel worse than anything that had happened, and she said: 'I wouldn't be a fool laughing at nothing in the dark.' I didn't say a word, but I did think this time I wasn't the foolish one. You poor dear children all worrying at home!"

"Never mind," I said as I tucked her in. "If you are not sick, there is no harm done. Go to sleep now and lie still in the morning. I'm afraid you'll be sick."

"I don't believe it," said Fanny as we went out still shaking with repressed laughter. "The boy who tumbles into the river and is fished out never is sick. People never are from such times. They rise to the emergency I suppose."

Morning proved the truth of Fanny's observation. Grandmother May's face looked placid as usual when I went in and she lay surrounded by newspapers.

"I'm not going to get up yet," she said; "but Katy brought me the mail, and I'm just reading a little. I'm afraid old lady Ogden is sick. I haven't heard her."

"Not a bit," I said, "she has just gone up to Tea's for something. You shall have your breakfast soon."

We sat down heavy and stupid as night-watches will make one. Grandmother Ogden looked better than anyone, and was evidently prepared for battle. Winthrop disappointed her. The escapade was not even alluded to, and she rose from the table disappointed and a little ashamed. Reproach would have roused her to defiance. Silence she did not know how to meet, and in her discomfiture I saw a future means of dealing with her.

"I'm going with Tea to do an errand," she said after the gentleman had gone, "unless you was going to want him."

"No, I shall not want him this morning," I answered; "but I should think you would be too tired to go out."

"I've had a night's rest," she said, "and I don't know as I've done anything to tire me so dreadfully. I ain't sugar nor salt to melt in a little rain, and riding isn't going to hurt any more than sitting at home."

"What is under way now?" said Fanny, coming in presently from her flower-beds.

"Tea has gone off in the farm waggon with Grandmother Ogden and a big empty box, and she looked as if she was ready to arrest all the conductors in New Jersey for contempt."

"Don't ask me, child. I shall spoil my cake if I stop to think. Fanny, if you want snaps you must come and make them. I will not spend the whole morning here when out doors is so heavenly. The ground is just right after the rain, and I want to transplant some coleus."

"I am hungry every moment," said Fanny coming in and making ready for baking, "and therefore I cannot find fault with cooking; but oh, what a pity that we must spend so much time! Buy snaps. No, don't, I implore you. They smell of saleratus and taste of pepper. Why can't a baker make home-made things?"

"Conundrum, Fanny. They can't, or at any rate they don't, and I am in love with a moderate amount of cooking, and don't care. That sponge is perfect to-day. Why, isn't it high art in its way?"

"It is," said Fanny bending over it, "and so is this most entrancing smelling thing. What is it?"

"I did not mean to tell, but I will. It is an ancient hen, the last of her generation, that 'came with the place,' as Tea says, and that simmered six hours before it yielded to my persuasive ways and grew tender. That was yesterday. This morning the fat was taken from the water in which it boiled, which was a thick jelly. This I melted, strained, and seasoned very highly. Then every scrap of meat was taken from the bones and put in layers, dark and white alternately, with rings of hard boiled eggs here and there. Then the melted jelly was poured over it, and to-morrow it will turn out a handsome mould in a bed of parsley, and behold your Sunday dinner. Now I shall make a pie to save Grandmother Ogden's feelings. A pieless dinner is something she can't understand; but I will not make many when there are dozens of puddings and we all like them. Isn't Katy's bread handsome?"

"I don't understand it," said Fanny. "I never thought you *could* be a house-keeper, you disliked it so, and yet how you go on. And everything is so nice. Not such a profusion, but things do taste so good. Can I ever, ever learn?"

"Nothing to prevent you, silly child. Any one with common sense can learn, though there is a difference in the ease and speed of course. But then, as Grandmother May ends her sentences, there are so many helps from Marion Harland and my beloved Mrs. Cornelius, down to Mrs. Warren's little

books, from which I learned the mastery of the bread question."

"What is the bread question?"

"Why I could *not* tell what to do with all the pieces—great plates of them, and gave them to the chickens. Now we use a bread board, and don't make as many, and all that are left are broken in bits and dried to a golden brown in the oven. Then we roll and sift them, and they are used in a dozen different ways; cutlets, and frying fish, and for thickening, and for puddings, now that I know how to make good bread pudding. Not a crumb is wasted, and stale bread is one of the worst leaks in housekeeping usually. You shall know all that I know, Fanny, before the summer ends. My success, such as it is, came from pure digging. Yours will be inspiration, I think. I believe you have a natural gift."

The morning flew as we talked and worked till at noon Katy came running down from Tea's house, where she had been sent on an errand.

"They've come! they've come!" she cried, "and it's in the pen!"

"What is in the pen?"

"The pig—the new pig. Mrs. Ogden's new pig. They came up Mr. Gay's lane so we needn't see, and the pig was in the box, and Tea put it into the pen, and the old lady is coming now."

Grandmother Ogden appeared before Katy ended.

"There," she said triumphantly, "the pig is here, and my own too, paid for every cent, and a small one, so we can grow good pork on him. Between waste here and waste at Tea's he ought to be fat."

"There is no waste here," I said hotly. "I make it part of my daily work to see that there is none. Did Winthrop know you meant to buy a pig?"

"No, he didn't, but it's all the same," said the old lady. "I told him there ought to be one to eat all the good food I saw in the ort-pail, and he didn't say no. If he had, it would have been because he didn't know what he needed and what he didn't. I counted eleven good potatoes in the ort-pail the other day."

"They were there because Katy upset a lamp she was filling and spilled kerosene on them."

"They've no business near the kerosene!"

"Very true; but Katy had forgotten to put them away, and as we do not flavour potatoes with kerosene every day, he will go hungry I am afraid."

"No danger," the old lady said. "He'll be fed, and when your butcher bill goes down half, you will thank me may be."

I was silent. Time enough to protest

against pork when it came into the house, and Mrs. Ogden, after waiting a moment, went up stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

"Eleanor, do you know our expenses are enormous?" said Winthrop one morning a week or two later.

"I knew that would come within a day," I answered. "You always worry over expenses when you have been shut up with your grandmother an hour. You might a good deal better have been watching the sunset under the trees with Fanny and me, than sitting up in that nightmare of a room groaning over a penny lost here or there."

Winthrop coloured a little.

"Don't be violent, Eleanor," he said. "I don't often groan."

"No, you do not? but, Winthrop, do you know this is the third time since she came that you have had a blue fit over expenses. You say sometimes I am more careful of your money than you are yourself. If you believe it, why not rest in faith, as Grandmother May says?"

"Bless her dear old soul!" Winthrop interjected. "But, Eleanor, she has always had a good deal of money, that is, she did until that rascally brother-in-law ran away with it all. We are limited, you know. There is the place to be sure, but taxes are very high, and it takes a good deal to keep it up. My profession is a slow one. I don't turn money like a speculator, and last year we had very little over four thousand."

"But you paid the premium on your life insurance, and put a hundred in the old bank."

"I know, but it's the little leaks that sink the ship; so much thrown away that might be used. You know I hate skimping, but with times so hard and so many out of work, it seems wrong to waste a thing. Now grandmother says she saw eleven good potatoes in the chicken-pail."

"That is like her," I said a little bitterly.

"She knew, for I told her exactly why they were there. Perhaps she would have liked to eat the eleven, kerosene and all. A lamp was upset and they were spoiled, Winthrop. Do you think it part of your sphere to see after the chicken-pail?"

Winthrop looked hurt.

"I certainly do not wish to interfere," he said. "But money has to be provided, and we are quite a family now. It is all new to you, Eleanor."

"Is it? Who knows most about it? I, who have given five years of hard conscientious study to the whole household economy,

or you, who barely know beef from mutton, and who listen to the complaints of an old woman who has not been here long enough to know either my aims or methods?"

"Of course she was wrong about the potatoes; but the bills were very high, Eleanor."

"Your family has doubled, and how can your bills remain the same? I detest running bills. I wish you would make me an allowance. Fix the amount you are willing to spend, and I will see that we do not go beyond it."

"But I don't know anything about it," said Winthrop uneasily, beginning to walk up and down. "I can't tell what would be needed in a month, and it would be a great temptation to have so much money in your pocket at once."

"It would be a great deal better to share the temptation," I said, looking towards a portfolio filling quite too rapidly for our means, with choice prints. Winthrop laughed.

"You have me there, I admit!" he said, "but it's no use, Eleanor. We couldn't manage so. We never know who is coming."

"For a lawyer, sir, you certainly have the most remarkable facility in forgetting evidence. I know, and have told you I did several times before, that is, I know the average number of guests, and all you have to do is to allow so much each one."

"You can't get it down to black and white."

"You can. How many times have I told you that, you doubting Thomas?"

"It sounds very small to be deciding beforehand the cost of all your friends, very small indeed."

"Not half as small as to grumble at the bills after they are gone. Now Winthrop, just listen. I have the general account in my house book of each month's expenses. Nothing to do but divide the total by the number of the family. For instance, the food of each person last month—and it is always about the same—cost ten dollars, exclusive of the vegetables the place supplies. That was in crude form of course. Now add to that each one's share of coal, light, wages, washing, clothing, newspapers—everything bills are sent in for, and why isn't that the cost of living?"

"It sounds well enough," said Winthrop, sitting down before me. "I'll think about it. I want you to have all I can afford, Eleanor."

"I wish you could be a woman for a week, Winthrop. Then you would know how detestable it is to ask for money. Suppose you had to come to me for every dollar?"

"No comparison, child. It is the man's business to furnish money and the woman's to make it fly."

"That is unjust and ungenerous. I do not make it fly. Whatever mind I have is used in making the most of it. Do I have the sole benefit of the house, or do you and yours share in it? I hear so many men say to their wives, '*your bills, your expenses,*' as if they had it all."

"Well, well, I'll think about it. We needn't worry, I suppose. We shall get along somehow. I may earn more this year."

"Winthrop, you make me distracted. You talk as if I were a fashionable spendthrift and you'd try and bear it."

"What irrational creatures women are! I talk nothing of the sort, for I know better. Everything I have is yours and you know it."

"Poetically, yes; actually, very far from it. Indeed in New Jersey I have no legal existence whatever, so how can I own everything?"

"For Heaven's sake, no woman's rights!" began Winthrop, and at this point Fanny came in with a roll of new music, and Winthrop went to the piano as if he had escaped this time. I went out to the piazza professing music sounded better at a distance, and sitting down in one of the Shaker chairs thought it all over, trying to end as I had often done before with, "Patience, you will accomplish it by-and-bye."

"I might have done," I thought bitterly; "but now everything I can say is made void by this miserable old woman perpetually interfering and spying, and so guarded he cannot see were it all tends. He is so easy tempered. He ought to silence her once for all. Why should he listen to her. She made endless trouble for his poor mother, and he knew it. Why can't he see that the same effect may follow here. I am not gentle and passive. I dislike her through and through. I would sent her away this moment if I could."

Then the thought came, "a lonely, forlorn woman, with no one but him;" but the answer was quick.

"She is lonely through her own fault and will. Friends are everywhere, if one chooses to make them. So long as Winthrop thinks it best to listen to all her out-pourings, he will be influenced in spite of himself. She has absolute genius for misrepresentation. I never knew anybody who could take a face, and so twist and turn it about that a dozen little lies become part of it. Somebody says the lie which has a foundation of truth is always hardest to meet. If there were children here she should not stay. I would never let my little ones grow up in such an

atmosphere of deceit and meanness and fault-finding. Old Mrs. Ward looked at me yesterday as if I were a Gorgon, and if I had not heard what was said to her, I should never have known why; but when Mrs. Ogden puts on her resigned voice, and says she feels obliged to stay in her room and do without necessary exercise for fear of being in my way, and her own room is the only spot where she seems to feel any right, why shouldn't soft-hearted Mrs. Ward think her abused. And then she told Mr. Daly she never rode, because the young people always wanted the carriage, and he brought her home and looked so reproachfully at me, and yet that very morning I had urged her to ride. I hate her!"

A dozen instances of double-dealing came up before me. I tried at last to put them away and went in, but the evening ended drearily, and morning found me in much the same state of mind.

This would never do. The evil spirit must be exorcised, and hard work I had always found the best remedy. I put on my broad hat and fled to the flower beds, where I weeded for half an hour with a fury which astonished the hens, out for their morning walk and on the watch for any stray worm which might be thrown out with my weeds. Winthrop came out as I turned towards the house, and looked so bright and happy, so oblivious of any cause of offence, that I took courage and determined upon the old Quaker's three rules of life: "Patience and Patience and more Patience." We called on the pig, who realized all Fanny's anticipations, and added to an exceedingly curly tail all the fondness for scratching the most exacting could desire.

"He is very thin," said Winthrop looking at him critically. "Grandmother Ogden says he never will do well until we have a cow and he can have plenty of sour milk."

"You mean to get one then?"

"Why, I'm thinking of it. In fact, grandmother says she would like to buy one herself, and let us have all the milk we wanted. You know how fond I am of new milk."

"Yes. I know that we have excellent milk now and rich cream from it for coffee. To take care of milk properly confines one very closely. Pans and temperature, and everything connected with it must be just so."

"Grandmother would attend to all that. You should not be troubled at all. It might keep her busy. There is the old milk cellar all ready. You know we used to have a cow."

"There is the breakfast bell," I said.

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"And see my hands. I must run," and run I did, feeling as if Grandmother Ogden and the cow were both pursuing.

We drove to the depot by as roundabout a road as possible, Winthrop chanting,

"What so fair as a day in June?"

and waving a spray of old-fashioned lilac from the car window as the train moved
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"Fanny," I said, "I am in a state of mind. I don't want to stay in the house or near it this morning. Let us go home, notify the grandmothers, put Katy in charge, and flee to the woods. Shall we?"

"We shall," said Fanny jubilantly, "and then we can talk with no key-hole nor crack where eye or ear can fasten. Wish we could go part of every day, for I'm sure to be filled with desire to say or tell something I ought not, the minute I see Mrs. Ogden's inquiring countenance. Even on the lawn I have a fancy she has an invisible ear-trumpet out, and knows all we are saying. Not that we say anything particularly out of the way, but she always twists what she does hear."

Grandmother May was deep in "Barchester Towers," and only said,

"Don't you sit down on the damp ground and don't stay. I shall miss you dreadfully." Grandmother Ogden was not to be found, so we left word for her, and Katy helped to put up our lunch with a wistful face.

"You shall go Saturday afternoon, Katy, and bring me some ferns," I said, "if you end your week as well as you have begun; and take good care of the old ladies, and be patient."

"That seems to be the family refrain," said Fanny as we climbed a fence, and began our march cross-lots. "I don't believe I could practise it all the time. I'm provoked with even little Grandmother May because she never sees nor knows how you are tried. It's extraordinary that Mrs. Ogden is such good friends with her; but it has its bad side, for I see plainly that she will end in making Grandmother May believe anything she chooses."

"Nonsense, Fanny! she can't. Grandmother May is too sweet natured to like slander or ugliness."

"You don't know anything about it, Eleanor. You do know that Mrs. Ogden has taken a turn, and instead of hating Grandmother May, wants to be with her, and talks incessantly about all she has done and borne for the family till she is really convincing her that you are young and hard on her, and don't realize her struggles and all that. Mrs. Ogden is a perpetual puzzle; but I think the secret is that she poses as a martyr, and can't be decent unless her role

is accepted. She puts on that air of self-extinguishment the moment the door-bell rings. She is an old fox, and yet how she does work. Tea is quite respectable, she has mended him so; but what is the use of work when one never knows what is coming, and she is so unexpectedly and uselessly cantankerous? What are you in a brown study over?"

"A cow. I'll tell you when this cruel tramp is over and we are under the trees. This is the edge of the wood, and in three minutes we shall be in Sanctuary. You've never yet been in my Cathedral."

Fanny stood without a word as we reached the circle of glorious pines, and stood upon the thick carpet of needles, the deep brown lighted up here and there by velvety moss on a gnarled root, or a clump of delicate ferns. Here and there a ray of sunlight fell through the thick dark branches, and lay a shimmering line on the brown below, but save for this, shadow and silence ruled, and only a sigh and an odorous breath from the tree tops swept by a passing breeze, broke the spell. Below flowed the brook, a soft, steady ripple, but hidden from us by overhanging banks. We laid our shawls on the ground and sat down, tired and heated, but resting in every fibre. Fanny had the blessed gift of silence in the right place, and for a long time we kept still together contentedly. A book and bit of work showed over the edge of the basket, and Fanny turned towards it presently with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Always bring your work," she said. "It's so soothing to the conscience. You know you could do it, and it's so delicious to let it alone. Eleanor, this is pure happiness. What should I do if you didn't love out doors?"

"Just what I should in case you didn't. Try and inoculate you with the fever. That is impossible, though, I believe. It is an instinct, and no science can transmit those. It is not only an instinct, but a mania with me. Even Winthrop does not quite love it as I do practically, though he does theoretically. He hates bugs, and I don't mind a thousand."

"That is the beauty of pine woods," said Fanny, leaning back luxuriously against a bed of moss. "They are so clean. There is no undergrowth, and you can't worry about snakes and creeping things generally. I don't mind much except measuring worms, but they are diabolical. Do you know, Eleanor, there was a tall, thin, black one travelling over my dress yesterday, and it stood up straight and looked at me, actually with Grandmother Ogden's very expression. It was too uncanny. I picked it up in a leaf

and gave it to a hen. Oh, that reminds me of the cow."

"It is senseless to talk to you about a cow, child. You wouldn't understand."

"If I can't understand a cow what can I understand?" said Fanny with dignity. "Is it beyond the average capacity?"

"This is a profit and loss question, Fanny, and you were never good at arithmetic, beguile you as I would. Grandmother Ogden wasn't a cow. Now having a cow means going without milk and cream, and being skimmed in butter. Skimmed is the New Jersey word."

"A very peculiar result to follow from owning the fountain of such articles. Explain."

"Tea knows, and has told me in strict confidence. They had one ten years ago to please Mrs. Ogden, and she kept the family on skim-milk, used the cream for butter, and then hid that, and gave out only the smallest possible pieces at a time. She proposes to buy the cow herself, and give us all the milk we want. Well, part of the year it will be dry, and we must buy anyway, and I do want that perfect Vermont butter, and plenty of it too, and I see breakers ahead."

"There is only one redeeming feature," said Fanny, "and that is that it will use up some of her fearful energy. Of course you will do as you please about the Vermont butter. What is the difference if it only keeps her quiet?"

"But don't you see that she will insist there is plenty of butter, and Winthrop is only a man, and doesn't understand, and she will have her own way and our discomfort?"

"No," said Fanny stoutly. "You are the judge of what is wanted, and have nothing to do but use your own sense without asking anybody."

"It will be like the pig. You know we wondered why Mrs. Ogden visited the barn so constantly. Do you know, as our waste proved insufficient, she has bought corn privately, and feeds him herself from an old knitting bag that I need not know. I saw her accidentally the other day, and yet this very morning she said the pig would burst if he was stuffed so. Oh, bah!"

"Don't think about her a minute when you are not obliged to," said Fanny looking at me attentively. "You look so worried and tired. I thought you never worried."

"I don't mean to; but she seems to come in unexpectedly at all times. Now we won't speak of her again till we have to. Aren't you hungry? Let us have some lunch, unless those big black ants have eaten it all."

No one can be too thankful for a temperament which throws off trouble easily; and the fact that one can, by no means presupposes a shallow nature. To make the most of the smallest pleasure; to draw refreshment and comfort from the tiniest source, is a gift of nature, but a gift that, like the gospel talent, can be increased tenfold by careful culture. Though I brooded more or less, and saw a thousand times more clearly than Winthrop the drift of what to him were the merest trivialities, it was yet counterbalanced by a steadily growing power to enjoy the present, even if the next hour brought its burden. So having told part of my woe, I ate my lunch with great satisfaction, drank water from the spring under an old root, sewed a dozen stitches, and then leaning back, listened with delight to Fanny's pure, even, lovely voice as she read from "The Earthly Paradise" the old and ever new story of Cupid and Psyche, never more daintily told by mortal man. A wood thrush, rarest heard of all birds, took up the theme as she ended, and poured out its heavenly sweet notes till the deep wood seemed alive with music.

"Its heart is at the secret source,
Of every pleasant thing."

Fanny said softly, as the silence came, and waited in vain for more. "That is not Shelley's skylark, jubilant and soaring; it is the full heart at rest and the music overflowing. We ought to be good, Eleanor, when we have had that."

Grandmother May rejoiced over our blue violets found in the old orchard beyond the wood. We filled the great fruit-dish with wet moss, from which they looked up as if at home, and Winthrop, who came out early, divided his attention between them and the mayonnaise Fanny and I concocted before supper.

"I am learning to respect cookery more and more," Fanny said, as she dropped her oil slowly into the creamy mass. "It seems a dreadful descent from Morris and the wood, and that heavenly bird, but it all chimes in after all. It's filling sense as well as soul, and to round out both perfectly is our work, isn't it?"

"That ain't the way to treat china," interrupted a voice, and Grandmother Ogden appeared noiselessly from somewhere. "That dirt and stuff will strike through, and you can't get the stain out."

"It has done duty for some years, and not struck through yet," I was able to say pleasantly. Nerves were in better order, and even if she was out of harmony, I was not. Running away from worries a little while is sometimes the very best prescription, and everything seemed brighter and better.

CHAPTER IX.

A TILT AGAINST "SHIF'LESSNESS."

We went into town directly after breakfast next morning, to stay only two or three hours. Judicious inquiry had lately brought to light the fact that Mrs. Ogden had only one thin dress of uncertain age, a deep chocolate-coloured muslin with unpleasant white dabs by way of figure. Fanny had suggested the bold idea that as her birthday came early in July, we should buy some pretty material and make cool afternoon dresses for both the old ladies, so that Grandmother May might feel attentions equally divided.

"She doesn't really need a new dress," said Fanny; "but then things are so cheap, and the little old lady does love pretty, bright things, and ought to have them. 'Tisn't so very much trouble."

We bought the very white and lilac striped jaconets with deep lilac border, spoken of not long before, and then stimulated by our success, a plain black grenadine.

"She will look so much better in something nice," Fanny said; "and the only way is just to get it and have it made and then she will feel it must not be wasted and will wear it. I took her measure one day 'all unbeknownst' when we were comparing sizes, and she is so up and down that I think that and a Bazaar pattern will be enough for your bright little dressmaker. How will she look? Two at once? Only think of it!"

Beguil'd by Fanny's enthusiasm I bought a cap and some ruffles for her neck, and returned home at once, prepared to cut out as soon as lunch was over. A wail sounded from above as we entered, and Grandmother May trotted down to meet us, much dishevelled as to cap and curls, and very pink as to cheeks, holding Tea's baby while Norma Annette looked over the stairs.

"I've done my part as well as I could," she said breathlessly. "But of all the babies ever I tended this is the very worst; but then, poor thing, its mother all white-wash and suds and it is not able to get at her; I don't know but I'd scratch and scream too. Eleanor, my dear, just you take it, and I'll run up and try to stop old lady Ogden. She'll be brought home a corpse, I'm truly afraid, if somebody doesn't stop her, and the whole house out under bushes; but then I don't wonder she felt bad, Tea's wife in that pink thing, it makes me dizzy to look at."

I took the baby mechanically, and we looked at one another with a sort of fascination, until, deciding me to be another enemy, its mouth opened and a yell of twenty baby-power began. Norma Annette sat down on

the stairs to receive it and proceeded to administer pounded crackers and sugar. I went into my room to take off my things and collect my senses; Fanny followed laughing, and Katy appeared flushed, and streaked with whitewash and began an explanation.

"Mrs. Ogden went up before you had been gone half an hour," she said, "and told Tea's wife she had come to clean the house, and they'd all got to turn to or she'd know why. She said, I must go too, but I told her I couldn't more than an hour anyway, because all my work was laid out; but I did want to see what she would do. Tea's wife tried to make believe she didn't feel very well, but Mrs. Ogden just snatched away her Peterson and said, 'Now look here! It's a burning shame and sin, and a scandalous disgrace, a good house like this, and ants and roaches and moths all over it, and dirt like poison so I wonder you can stir. Now I've made up my mind. You haven't but four rooms and an attic, and I say they shall be clean, and I say they shall be kept clean too.' There's lime and soap, and sand and brushes coming from the store, and you may just set everything right out of doors. They've got to be scoured inside and out if it takes all night." I guess if you had two or three little children, Tea's wife began, but Mrs. Ogden said, 'Now I'm not going to talk, I'm going to do,' and she pulled open the closet door. It really was horrid. Rinds and pieces of everything, and roaches running, and things so sticky you didn't want to touch them. So I said I could clean that, and I'd do all I could in an hour, and Mrs. Ogden took the baby and ran back and told Mrs. May she must see to it, and it went to sleep on her bed good as could be, with Norma hushing it. Didn't it?"

"Beautiful!" said Grandmother May, who sat in the door-way fanning; "but then it didn't stay asleep."

"Well, it was up here," Katy went on, "and Mrs. Ogden began at the bedroom and made Tea take down the beds and set them out doors. Then she sent him for Mrs. Slapson, and she came right over and they're all working now. Don't you want to go up and see?"

"Not until we have had lunch. We are tired and hot, for the carriage was not at the depot. Next time I go away, Katy, you are on no account to leave the house unless I direct it. I do not wish Mrs. May to be alone or to be tired out with the children."

"But I don't know how to get off, when Mrs. Ogden says I must. She'd knock anybody down that wouldn't. I'm sorry."

"You are not to blame this time, but remember another."

Katy rushed away to get lunch, and Fanny and I looked at one another. Evidently the children had run riot through the house. A vase on a bracket in my room lay in fragments; the old sideboard which stood in a deep niche in the hall was deluged with water from the ice pitcher; and in the parlour, books lay on the floor, and the piano cover had been dragged partly off in an attempt to open it, ten sticky fingers having left their mark on that and the polished front.

"Home Missionary work is very well," I said as we finished our examination; "but I prefer to do it in my own fashion. This is really too much."

At this moment Tea appeared in the open door, shamefaced and apologetic as his nationality would allow.

"Now Mis' Winthrop," he said, "you're welcome to scold, an' I wish you would. Fact is, I hadn't no idee what time it was, an' when I started to harness, there you was walkin' in at the gate. I ain't quite sure whether I'm on my head or my heels. I put out Prince, and was in the barn untyn' that ring-tailed roarer's legs, I would say the speckled hen. She's set on everything, from a china egg up to a box of nails, and at last I tied her legs up with rags till they was like sausages, and I vow if I didn't find her this morning in an old hat settin' tiptoe. I give it up then, an' I was undoin' of her, an' thinkin' to myself, 'Well set then, it's the woman in ye, an' you'll set if it's on red hot iron,' and I heard my wife hollerin' to me, pretty lively for her, an' I ran out, an' there was the old lady bundlin' her out o' house and home. Between you an' me, Mis' Winthrop," Tea went on with a twinkle, "I wasn't sorry to have something start Almiry up, an' she's started sure enough. You wouldn't know the place this minute; but I declare I'm sorry you had to walk."

"Never mind, Tea, only do not let it happen again. You should have kept the children up there and not troubled Mrs. May. She is not strong enough to manage them, and they have done a good deal of mischief."

Tea looked miserable.

"Take it out of my wages, Mis' Winthrop, if it's smashing," he said. "They're so used to that at home I wouldn't wonder at it here, but I never thought. The old lady says she's going to clean the barn after she's through with us." Fanny burst into such a fit of laughter, that the baby crowed and Grandmother May giggled all the way down stairs.

"I'm so glad to hear you laughing," she said; "I declare Eleanor, I did think you

wouldn't like it, but the old lady Ogden must do something. 'Tisn't as if she was a useless body like me, but she has always had care on her mind and she can't get it off; but then, as I told her, I never should dare go in anybody's house so, but then she is hard to turn. Shan't you go up after her?"

"No, I'll send Katy," I began.

"Don't," said Fanny, "or you will not see her again till the barn is cleaned, and every nail in every shingle high polished. Send Tea."

Tea brought back word presently that she had had all she wanted, and couldn't stop for more, and we ate lunch with a delightful sense of freedom. Grandmother May, after it was over, put on several shawls and her rubbers and went up to view the enemy's ground, but actually frightened at the fury with which Grandmother Ogden attacked and beat the remains of a rag carpet, turned and fled back to her own room. We followed, certain of being called upon if we were seen, and took refuge under the three great pines at the west end of the place, between two of which a hammock was swung.

"It will never be perfect till you have one too," Fanny said, as after protesting I ought to take it, she yielded, and swung lightly back and forth looking up through the branches. "In fact there should be three, and then Mr. Ogden could luxuriate too. No, though, for the mosquitoes won't let us enjoy them after sunset. They are only for summer afternoons. Imagine Mrs. Ogden in one! Has she ever stopped to rest one minute since she was born? That sort of energy is frightful, for when the power to work is gone, how will she live? Eleanor, when people's souls are narrowed down in that fashion to one fine point, I wonder if it doesn't take three or four dying at once, to make one large enough to even start towards Heaven."

"Fanny!" I began, but stopped as she rolled from her hammock and flew into the little summer-house, where I followed with equal speed.

Over our pretty lawn careered a small red cow, closely pursued, first by Nep, then by a man who after a dash through our best flower bed, and a kick at Nep, did secure the rope which hung from her neck, and stood panting before us.

"She's a little lively," he said apologetically, "and skeered of the dog a little too. Her calf's just took, and that mads her, but the old lady liked her looks."

"Take her out fast as you can," I said.

"We do not like cows."

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to," the man said doubtfully. "The old lady, Squire Ogden's mother, she come down yesterday morning and bargained for this cow—the milkman he told her about it, and I was to bring her to-day."

"Take her to the barn then this minute," I said, as Nep made another demonstration and the horns waved before us.

"You poor thing!" said Fanny compassionately as we ran to the house and sank exhausted on the great sofa. "I don't wonder you didn't want a cow. Do you suppose these are her usual habits?"

"I don't suppose. I only hope Grandmother Ogden will milk her, and have exercise enough to last through the day. I don't believe Winthrop thought of her getting it yet. He didn't speak of it this morning."

"No, he couldn't have known," said Fanny confidently. "It wouldn't have the right flavour unless she could smuggle it in. I certainly didn't mean to enter the house again for two or three hours, but as we are here, suppose we go to work again on Fingal's Cave. My hands are not quite steady yet, and I shall make more false notes than I did last time. They are in good condition for Wagner. He is principally false notes. He had probably had a vision of Grandmother Ogden and her doings before he wrote the Flying Dutchman."

"Don't insult what you cannot understand, profane girl!" I said severely. "No, Fanny, I am utterly demoralized and don't want to 'cut out' or practise or anything. The day is ruined. Suppose we call on the neighbours. I am just forlorn enough to be willing."

A prolonged shriek from the barn arrested me here. We ran to the south windows and looked. Nep barked, the men shouted, and Tea's wife stood screaming and helpless. The wild animal had escaped again, and plunged through and over a circle of stone pots, crockery, and old tins, scattering them to the four winds.

"At last," said Fanny, "Grandmother Ogden has occupation enough. Let us leave her with her cow and not come home till we hear the train."

Grandmother May was sound asleep as we looked into her room, and we went first to Mrs. Wingate's, happy to find she was in town, and from there down the hill, house after house, till the whistle sounded and we turned home again. Grandmother May sat on the piazza, well up in a corner to avoid draughts, but smiling to think she had ready at last done what we wished, and come out to the open air.

"I'm going to stay two or three minutes," she said; "for it does seem as if you couldn't

take cold and the air like July: but then you never know what you may take when you're out, and old lady Ogden has come in and laid down, the very first I ever knew her to do such a thing. She said she was all beat out and it wasn't the cleaning at all; but she wouldn't tell what it was; but then I thought most likely it was 'a sinking,' and I made her take a mite of brandy,—just a mite and a cracker. She walked lame as could be, and she's lost her cap and she can't tell where. Tea's hunting for it now, and the children to. Eleanor, I really do think you ought to hinder her some way from working so. She'll kill herself."

As this remark was made twenty times a day, there was no particular answer. I went up for a moment to Mrs. Ogden's room, found her asleep, probably the first time in her life she had ever slept in the daytime, and went down the back stairs to speak to Katy. Tea had just come in, and held out a purple and black rag, which on examination proved to be Grandmother Ogden's cap.

"Where did you find it, Tea?"

"In the hen house," said Tea, shaking silently, "where the animile sent it flying. I tell you, Mis' Winthrop, I was considerably scared, for I didn't know but what the old lady might 'a broke some bones. I told her, says I, 'There ain't no use in your tryin' to milk that beast. You can see it in her eye, and she's mad for her calf. I don't think much o' your bargain, though she may turn out a good milker."

"That made her kind o' riled, an' for all I could say she hunted up the old milkin' stool, an' got the pail an' went up. The cow just looked round out o' one eye an' stood. 'There, you see,' says she, 'you don't know anything about it. She stands well enough. I guess I haven't forgotten how to manage a cow.' The words wasn't out of her mouth when over she went, an' that cow head down, heels up, ready to go at her again. I sprung, I can tell you, and gave it to her with a pitchfork I had handy, but it was all I could do to take up her mind with whang-ing while the old lady crawled up. She tried to walk off natural, and Mis' Slapson fixed her up with arnica, but she won't feel like doin' much more milkin' I guess. I hed to tie the thing up before I could get nigh her; but I'm bound to say it's tip-top milk. Kind o' heated and roilly with her cuttin's up, but yaller and good."

"Take it home and give it to the pig. I don't want heated milk."

"I wouldn't mind," Tea said; "but you see the old lady might, as the cow's her'n. She's pretty particular, you know."

I flushed involuntarily, but said, "I for-

got it was not mine to dispose of. Take it down stairs and leave it in the milk cellar. Always take it there. We have nothing to do with it."

At this point Grandmother Ogden appeared, pale and wincing a little as she moved, but otherwise as usual.

"I'll see to it myself," she said. "I choose to. I ain't going to have anybody else touch it. I've got a sealed quart, so's to know exactly how much she gives from the very first day. None of your guess work for me."

"Here's your cap, marm," said Tea, "but I reckon it's done for. The old rooster grabbed it and he and the young one had a fight, and I trod it in before I seed it. Maybe you can mend it."

Grandmother Ogden took it without a word and went off with her pail.

"He's a plucky one," said Tea admiringly. "Never see such a woman since I was born. If that cow had danced a hornpipe on her she'd never let on she minded. Not she!"

"She must be terribly tired," I said as half an hour later she walked into the parlour in her Sunday cap, the effect of which was heightened by a bandage around her forehead, half hiding the great black-and-blue bruises.

Grandmother May broke out into pitying exclamations; but the indomitable old lady waved them aside impatiently.

"There's nothing to make a fuss about," she said. "Cows in a strange place ain't likely to stand still. One thing's done anyhow. Tea's wife has got a clean house in spite of herself, and it's got to stay clean or I'll know the reason why. Shiftless thing!"

CHAPTER X.

INTERLUDES.

For a week we saw very little of Grandmother Ogden. The milk-cellar, really only a large closet with stone floor and two broad low shelves, was scrubbed and whitewashed, and a dozen bright pans in rows, her little stone pot for cream, her skimmer and "sealed quart," made quite an imposing array. A small stick hung from a nail, the use of which Rabenstein learned at once. His nose had smelled cream, and his crafty mind determined upon having it; but Grandmother Ogden divined his deepest thought, and never once had he stolen softly down the cellar stairs, without finding his enemy, rod in hand, ready for vengeance. Everything gave way to the milk, and if late for breakfast or tea, or not in proper costume for seeing callers or going to ride, it was because she had either just begun to skim or just been skimming, or

scouring her pans, or taking them in from their morning sunning and airing. Any baby would have thriven, washed and scrubbed and sunned with the same degree of enthusiasm, and why not then the milk, which certainly was perfect?

Why it was not "heated" every night, I could never tell; for the cow practised every sort of light and heavy gymnastics. She trod suddenly upon so many chickens that the speckled hen trailed her wings and clucked with fury if she drew near. She unhooked the barn-yard gate and ate up the young corn and two rows of peas just ready for bushing. Milking time was known throughout the neighbourhood by Tea's shouts of "Steady now! Whoa up! Stand still, you beast!" and the children's screams as they stood watching their father. The pail was kicked over until Mrs. Ogden said she should charge Tea so much a quart for loss, and then he tied the cow's legs in some mysterious fashion, so that lashing her tail in his eyes or whisking off his hat was the only action left.

Two quarts a day were sold to our opposite neighbour at the milkman's price, and I begged for the same arrangement. This could not be. Skim milk was good enough for the family and might be had for less than half price, so every drop of cream went into the stone pot, coming out every Saturday a small ball of golden butter, very delicious, but doled out with such anxious scrutiny of each crumb, that all enjoyment was lost, and I longed to end the nuisance. Winthrop alone was allowed a full fresh pint every morning, and finding at last it was useless to contend with her, I ordered the milkman to come as usual, and once more rejoiced in the little pitcher of cream for our morning coffee.

Mrs. Ogden said nothing to me, but a day or so later as Winthrop sat down to his goblet with an approving nod, remarked in a casual manner,

"You seem to like it better'n El'nor does."

"How so?"

"Oh, she's gone back to the milkman and takes of him."

"That's ridiculous, when we keep a cow." Winthrop began.

"So I think," said I, seeing that battle was inevitable. "If your grandmother would give me two quarts of fresh milk a day, I should take it gladly, but she skims it first, and I prefer not to use skimmed milk."

"Boil it then," said Mrs. Ogden. "It's better skimmed than milkman's milk with the cream left on. When butter's forty

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cents a pound you've no business to want cream. You'll call for dollar bills on your bread next."

"We cannot keep a cow and buy milk," said Winthrop emphatically. "Can't you settle it with Eleanor and let her have it fresh?"

"It's my own cow."

"Very true; but Tea takes care of it and I pay his wages and the feed bill too. Charge what you please, but let us have some share of the milk."

"I'll buy the feed myself," returned Mrs. Ogden wrathfully. "I never thought to have a bag or two of feed thrown at me. You shall have the whole, and El'nor can take charge and see how she likes work for a change."

"The cow might far better be sold for beef, than constantly make trouble," I said. "But there need be no trouble if you will simply sell us two quarts a day or more when needed, just as you do to Mrs. Cochran."

"Well, I've no objections," said Mrs. Ogden reservedly, and Winthrop with a—"There Eleanor! You see there need be no fuss," turned away.

For a week this lasted. Then one morning going through the cellar, I saw Mrs. Ogden turn out one quart of fresh from the foaming pail just brought in by Tea, and add one quart from the skimmed pan of the previous night, shake them together to give the frothy look of new milk, and walk out with the pail in her hand. She changed colour slightly as she saw me.

"I want three pints extra this morning if you can spare it," I said. "I am going to make custards."

"Here's a pan with just three pints. I'll take off the cream."

"No; I want the cream stirred in."

"Well, I'll just take it off. It turns easy, and you'd better heat your milk without it, and stir it in afterwards."

"Very well," I said thinking, "anyway, so long as I get it." And Mrs. Ogden hopped the cream into a cup with a loving and lingering tenderness over every drop, followed me up stairs.

"Suppose for once you leave out the cream," she said, after watching me for a few moments. "See how they'll be, and if you don't like 'em, I won't say a word next time."

Her tone was so unusually pleasant that I hesitated.

"No," I began, but stopped. "Very well. I'll try it once; but you must remember your side of the bargain."

"I ain't one to go back on what I say," she answered briskly, and I went on turning my Dover egg-beater till the eggs were a

smooth yellow cream, then mixed them with the milk and sugar, and went to the closet with a pan in order to fill it with cups. The slide between kitchen and dining-room closets had been opened, and as I bent over to pick up a towel I saw Grandmother Ogden with a quick motion pour the cup of cream into the custard and walk away carelessly.

Her small plot was plain before me, but after the first impulsive movement, I said nothing, determined to bide my time until the right moment.

The custards were baked, cooled, and put in the refrigerator to wait for teatime. John Wilder came out with a basket of strawberries finer than any our bells had produced, and Grandmother Ogden voluntarily brought up a cup of cream.

"You'll have all the more," she said, pleasantly, "for having saved some this morning."

I smiled and waited.

"Pretty good custards," she said as half an hour later we all sat about the tea-table. My best loved neighbour, gentle Mrs. Gray, had come in, been beguiled into staying, and now smiled approval back again.

"Now you see," grandmother Ogden went on, "they *are* good enough even if you do leave out the cream. Eggs make up for it. I tell El'nor, Winthrop, that she might save consid'able that way, and she was accommodating enough to try these with just the skim milk."

"They are delicious, whatever is in them," busy on his third.

"There is no reason why they should not be," I began, then hesitated. It was an excellent opportunity for a small revenge, but pity had its way. It was folly to spoil the family peace for the evening, only I would have the comfort of telling Fanny by-and-bye.

Grandmother Ogden, delighted that her little fraud had succeeded, exulted herself and was really entertaining in some curious reminiscences of the fight in Portland Harbor between the Boxer and the Enterprise in the war of 1812.

"I've got a firkin the captain of the Boxer gave my father afterwards," she said. "A little one, painted red, that holds just seven pounds, and I used to keep white sugar in it. You like out-of-the-way things so much, Eleanor, I'll hunt it up some day. Father set considerable store by it, and gave it to me when I was married."

"I remember writing a composition about it and getting no end of compliments on my historical knowledge," said Winthrop laughing. "That fight is all the United States history I know."

"Winthrop!" said Grandmother Ogden severely. "And you with a college educa-

tion, and your father before you, and rows on rows of histories in the library."

"I don't mean it is all I have read grandmother, but all that impressed me profoundly; that and our ancestress being hung for witchcraft."

"I wouldn't tell of it," said Mrs. Ogden colouring deeply. "Such things ain't to be talked about. Our family has always been decent, God-fearing people, respectable every one of them, that never wanted to make talk for the town."

"I consider her the most respectable of them all," said Winthrop stoutly. "For she had character and strength enough to resist every temptation they put before her, and died rather than confess to acts of which she knew her innocence. She was a martyr and is a saint. I drink to St. Huldah!"

"The cup ought to crack for such blasphemy," said Grandmother Ogden, as we all rose and drank standing. "I sha'n't stay by to countenance it, whatever the rest do. You might have a word to say, Mis' May, and he your own grandson swearing about his own great-great-grandmother."

We all laughed except Grandmother Ogden, who went down to her milk pans holding her head very high, and when she reappeared declined firmly joining us on the piazza. The night was stifling hot. Though only the last of June dog-days seemed to have begun, and for two or three days we had suffered as much as in August. Grandmother May laid aside her shawls and began to fan, and to-night sat with us, though in the corner behind Winthrop.

"That's two mosquitoes I've killed," she said presently. "And it's growing damp. I'll go in I guess."

"You're mistaken, I am sure," said John leaning over and feeling of the grass. There isn't one drop of dew. You will melt in the house. It was eighty-six in the parlour, and up stairs it is one hundred and eighty-six."

"Well, I can't more than melt, said Grandmother May placidly, "and I'm 'most melted now. I never did see such weather; but then we ought to be thankful for any; but then I don't know as we shall live to need it if it keeps on so."

"Come up on the roof," said Winthrop. "It is always cool there."

"My heart!" exclaimed Grandmother May, really turning pale. "I wouldn't for the world, and I won't hear to your doing it either. You'd all fall off and no way of saving one of you."

"There's a railing over a foot high about it."

"You'd break it and roll through."

"The piazza would stop us."

"Now I do know better than that. There's no railing to them and the scuttle stairs no more than a ladder. Somebody would break something."

"Don't be troubled," said Mrs. Gay. "They can't do it now for somebody must go home with me. That is the penalty for keeping me when I did not mean to stay."

"We will all go," I said. "We can't be any hotter and the evening is beautiful after all, unless you had rather ride. Shall I send for Tea?"

"No, indeed, thank you. Let us just say good-night to Mrs. Ogden. She ought to be here enjoying the night."

"I leave that for folks that ain't particular about doing much," said Grandmother Ogden appearing from the hall but evidently intending no offence. "The cow seemed to wheeze to-day, and we've been giving her a mash with a sprinkling of hops. The milkman said it would be good for her."

"I feel impelled to state that the cow has made several mashes with hops in them," said Winthrop, "but refrain, the family feeling against any trifling with language being very strong."

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Gay. "Alice went to the sewing school at the chapel this morning, and one of those bright little Heckel children had to rip out a seam she had spoiled. Alice said she sat there with the perspiration in drops on her little freckled nose, pulling out the grimy stitches, and said, 'I know a verse about this kind of work, teacher.' 'Do you,' asked Alice. 'What is it?' 'They that sew abundantly shall rip abundantly, and they that sew sparingly shall rip also sparingly.' Alice laughed so she could hardly explain."

"I don't see anything to laugh at," said Mrs. Ogden, "making light of Scripture that way. If that's all they learn at these mission schools I don't think much of 'em. There's too much spent on 'em, to my mind."

Mrs. Gay said good-night and turned away, evidently not intending to be drawn into any argument. She did more good than any other woman in Glenville, but so quietly that few realized it; the ladies of the mission-school begun by her being quite sure the thought had originated with them.

"Neither you nor I have have ever down any work in them," I said, "and so we know nothing about it and cannot judge."

"I guess I can have an opinion," said Mrs. Ogden. "That's free if nothing else is."

Winthrop hurried out, as he always did when the war-note sounded, and Mrs. Ogden shut the wire door energetically and went in

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to Grandmother May, who sat fanning herself on the great sofa.

"Win," said John on the way home, "do you remember how we used to camp on the roof when we were students? Your grandmother had the same objection Mrs. May has, and we used to steal up in our stockings after she was safely in bed. There was an old husk mattress in the attic, and we took it up and slept deliciously upon it till daylight, while the bedrooms were a fiery furnace."

"The mattress still lives," said Winthrop. "We can do it again, but she may find us out. She did then."

"But only because your inordinate and untimely appetite would have its way. The pantry door would creak and she heard that. Winthrop had a whole pie, Miss Walton, and I was the only one she ever forgave for stealing pies. She followed swift and silent, and when he rose up through the scuttle and waved his pie, she rose too, snatched it and ordered us in, in language I am powerless to describe. She wept over that mattress, for it had been rained on and dried and rained on again till it was mildewed and used up generally."

"I gave her five dollars to cover wear and tear," said Winthrop, "and the property is mine now. We can leave it where we please."

"It is in the attic now," I said, "and I have done nothing with it, because your grandmother said it was hers. In fact there are two, just about alike, both equally good for nothing."

"All the better," said Winthrop. "You and Fanny shall have one and John and I the other, and for once we'll be thoroughly cool."

Grandmother May had gone to bed when we got back. Grandmother Ogden was in her room. We shut up the house as usual, and each went to their respective quarters. Half an hour later, Grandmother Ogden came to our door—

"It seems just as if I heard a creaking on the roof," she said. "Where's the garret key? I'll go up."

"Nonsense, grandmother," said Winthrop, who had just returned from a trip to that region. "I'll attend to it if it's necessary. Roofs often make noises after a hot day."

"I've heard they would," said Mrs. Ogden doubtfully, "but this sounded to me like steps."

"Well the door is locked, and burglars don't generally begin on the roof. Go to bed, grandmother, and rest easily. I shall hear any alarm."

Twice the old lady sallied out as we made a move.

At last silence settled down, and one by one we stole up the attic stairs. Winthrop locked the door, pocketed the key, and in a moment we were out of the stifling, pent-up heat, had slid the scuttle door back to its place, and stood under the starlight. Winthrop had put the mattresses at a point where the new roof sloped down and met the old, thus making a couch on which we leaned back luxuriously.

The moon had gone down and we could barely distinguish one another's faces, but the darkness took away all sense of height, or thought of falling. Fanny clasped her hands over her head and looked up. We were all still. Talking might have roused the ever-vigilant Grandmother Ogden, and no one cared to talk. The peace of the night over-shadowed us and entered in. I looked up and beyond the stars till the deep, intense blue seemed to close about me and make a cradle in which I rested safe and sure. We rested quietly till the dew began to fall, then stole down again to our rooms, doubly hot after the free breath of the upper air.

"To-morrow I'll rig a canvas or something," said Winthrop, "so that one can stay there all night. I'm not sure we should get any cold even without one, for regular campers-out never do; but you will have the canvas and make sure. Then I see no reason why we should not use our roof all summer."

"What would Mrs. Grundy say if she knew?" I suggested.

"Mrs. Grundy be hanged!" Winthrop returned energetically. "If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob slept on the house top with their whole families, why not we? Are we wiser than both dispensations? The roof it shall be, and now for a summer's circumvention of our friends and relations."

CHAPTER XI.

DRIFTING.

"Something has got to be done with that dog," said Grandmother Ogden a few days later. "I believe he is possessed. Between his howling and yowling and the everlasting creaking that tin roof keeps up, I can't get a mite of sleep half the time. Give me plain shingles, though I will say I think that tin is put on wrong. Smith is a shif'less fellow and always was, and likely didn't more than half nail it. That's the only way I can account for the way it snaps and starts. Anyhow, that dog has got to be hushed up. I'm a good mind as ever was to shoot him myself."

"Now you don't mean it," said Grandmother May, as Fanny flashed a look at me over the coffee cup. "You know you wouldn't have the heart. I looked out last

night just to see what he could mean, and the moon shining so beautiful you'd think it would have kept him still, but then it didn't. There he was sitting up straight and his nose in the air, howling so melancholy and all the dogs everywhere howling back. It did sound for all the world like tuning a dozen old bass-voils. You couldn't very well get a much deeper bass than Nep's voice; almost musical. only it went up too sudden.

"If his bark sinks 'tis to another C," quoted Fanny wickedly. "The amusing thing to me is the quality and extent of yelp in that small terrier opposite, and the intense and painful squeak of Mrs. Cochran's pug. Then did you hear the butcher's dog answer in a roaring bass always on one note? There is a cat's fugue, why not a dog's? I will try it to-day."

"Don't you think it's enough if you listen to it at night, without doing it yourself in the daytime? but then I don't suppose you could make quite so much noise. You wouldn't want to either," Grandmother May remarked meekly.

"She'll make all she can, I'll be bound," said Mrs. Ogden grimly. "I'm going up on the roof to see if that tin can't be fastened. If it's loose enough to snap the way it does, the first high wind'll take it off, and then where'll you be? And I will say, Winthrop, I think it rather queer doings in Eleanor to keep the garret locked and I always wanting to go up to my things. It would be much more proper for me to have the key."

Winthrop looked at me. Our roof was in camping order, and how was she to be headed off? We had spent half of one night rigging a sort of canopy which could be raised or lowered at will, and had wrapped the hammer in flannel so that the few nails which must be driven need not betray us. The carpenter had been smuggled up during one of her absences and had put up strong hooks from which hammocks could swing. Two were hung, though one mattress remained as divan, the other being returned to the attic to divert suspicion in case Mrs. Ogden should penetrate there.

"Tell her outright and stop this ridiculous mystery," I had said to Winthrop. "We are not children or fools, and she should understand that we do what is best for us, though it might not be for her."

"But don't you see," said Winthrop, "she is honestly afraid of our catching cold and dying. What is the use of worrying her and spoiling her rest when by a little strategy we secure hers and our own too?"

"I am tired of strategy," I said hotly. "It is degrading to steal up there like

thieves and never speak above our breaths. I shall tell her."

"What an unreasonable creature you are, Eleanor. I really believe you relish a squabble, and burn like the Paddy to have somebody tread on your coat tail. Do let well enough alone."

I was silent. Certainly the fights did come oftener, try as I would to be patient. I puzzled over the rights and wrongs of our daily living; wondered why truth must not always be best, and whether inevitable deterioration of moral fibre did not ensue when one must perpetually shift and evade.

Stolen waters were *not* sweet. I resented more and more the petty curiosity which hesitated at no question and demanded as a right every least detail. No unhappy beetle on its pin ever writhed more than I under that microscopic investigation. Was my fate always to be impalement on an interrogation point? Certainly I was not secretive. On the contrary, too open and outspoken with those in whom I believed, yet Mrs. Ogden had set me down as not only secretive, but deceitful and defiant, and truly I did at times seem all three.

Duty was growing less absolute—more relative. Must my own soul shrivel because hers was small? Must my weakest points be always attacked and my strongholds fall before so petty a foe?

"It is my discipline," I said many times a day. "How utterly petty must be my nature when a word or look can so chafe and irritate that one alone often ruins my day. Learn to be still. She cannot change and you can. In *quietness* shall be your strength."

Excellent preaching, but oh, the weary practising! For myself I might bear it, but the home life was changing, and against that I struggled with all my strength. It had meant so much I could never let it mean less, yet how helpless I stood before this slow-rising tide of petty misrepresentation, misunderstanding, peevishness and narrowness. It should not swamp us, and I laughed a forlorn laugh as Mrs. Partington and her broom occurred to me. At least the broom should fly till worn to a stump even if the ocean had its way at last.

I had lost myself, and roused with a start, as Mrs. Ogden said loudly;

"I suppose it's manners so long as you do it; but in my time folks answered questions, and didn't go to sleep over 'em."

"I beg you pardon," I said hastily, "you were speaking of the key. Winthrop has it, I think."

"Yes, and I shall keep it, grandmother. You mustn't go into that stifling attic and fry your brains in such weather as this. I

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know you will if I leave the key at home, and so I take it."

"Oh I don't mind particularly if you'd rather have it. I only didn't want to be put upon, or have folks take too much on themselves. That's all only about the dog. Something shall be done this very night."

"Let him sleep in the kitchen," I said.

"And dog's hair in every mouthful you eat. If you like it, why I don't"

"Then put him down cellar"

"And my milk, and he bursting open the door and licking up every mite of cream"

"Tie him to the stairs then," I said, giving the last available suggestion.

"That's a good idea," said Winthrop.

"Then if a burglar does come, the cellar is our weakest point, and once in, he'll find an unexpected friend waiting for him. I'll try it to-night."

Nep protested when the time came, but yielded finally, and missing the accustomed challenge, our neighbours' dogs grew comparatively quiet, so that a tolerably peaceful night was passed.

John congratulated us on the happy thought, and Grandmother Ogden's only complaint now was the curious and persistent cracking of the tin roof.

The dresses had been made, and though declined at first, Fanny's theory had proved true. So much expenditure must be utilized, and for the first time within my knowledge, and probably in her life, the old lady looked as well as nature would allow. In spite of herself a look of gratified pride struggled with shamefacedness, as Winthrop said the first time he saw the lilac cambric.

"Why, Grandmother Ogden! I never knew you were so handsome. You're really more stunning than Grandmother May."

"I've got more important things to think about than clothes, I hope," returned Mrs. Ogden in a mildly severe manner.

"I always told you you ought to fix a leetle more, and you do look so well," said Grandmother May, nodding approvingly.

"Now just a mite more stuffing, and there's not many young women with a good a figure I wish I had it."

Grandmother Ogden laid down her knife and fork, and sat for a moment paralyzed.

"Mrs. May," she said solemnly, "I want to know! You don't mean you wear stuffing! I never would have thought it of you!"

"Of course I do. I should like to know why not," returned Grandmother May with exasperating calmness. "And there's another thing you really ought to do. My blessed mother always did it. Just to dry a little starch and pound it fine, and sift it

through book-muslin, and then you put a little on a flannel and just rub it on your face. It's very cooling, and it takes off all the shine, and you know working round in the heat you do get so shiny."

Grandmother Ogden became rigid.

"I thank the Lord I never knew whether I was shiny or not!" she said. "Stuffing, and whitewashing, and I suppose painting. Your mother must have been near a fool, and I feel to say you're one too, at your time of life to be going on like a painted actress or a Jezebel."

Grandmother May's cheeks flushed pink.

"I've lived seventy-four years," she answered slowly, "and that's the first time I ever heard such words applied to my blessed mother. I never said I was anything but foolish, but a lady the whole parish looked up to, and my father bowing as if she was a queen when he handed her into her pew, and tears in your eyes to see him, and the handsomest couple in Cheshire County."

"I've heard she was a very respectable, stirring woman," said Grandmother Ogden, intending an apology, but Grandmother May was not to be appeased at once.

"There's something beside stir," she said. "My mother was stirring, but she had a smile and a good word for the whole world, and no church could hold the people that came to look at her in her coffin, and followed her crying to her grave. She powdered her face and took care of her hands and crimped her ruffles, and she walked like a queen, and they called her Lady Huntingdon to the last minute she lived."

"Well, well!" said Grandmother Ogden, uneasily, "I wasn't saying anything against her. I didn't mean much."

"I'm glad you didn't," said Grandmother May, settling her plumes like a belligerent bantam, and beginning to smile again. "I suppose it is foolish to think too much about your figure; but then it did try me always to see my India shawl and know I was so high shouldered I never could show it off well, and there was our black Nanee, with a figure like an angel you might say, if you only saw her back."

At this point the iceman's bill made a diversion. Mrs. Ogden descended to her milk, Fanny and John went out for a button-hole bouquet, and Winthrop's white forehead wrinkled unpleasantly as he looked at the total.

"Double what is needed," he said impatiently. "Grandmother says if she took care of the ice she would get along on quarter the amount. We must economize."

"We will," I said. "We can easily dispense with the broken ice for claret, and

with the fruit ices for dessert. In that way we shall save fully half the bill."

Winthrop looked provoked. Ices were his weakness, and I knew it, and gratified it whenever I could. My freezer was an excellent one, and I had experimented with every variety of fruit, till my reputation grew more brilliant with each venture. Creams I seldom tried. Fruit ices were cheaper and quite as delicious; and currants, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, all yielded up their souls to my persuasive power, and appeared in a spiritualized and ravishing form at my bidding.

Winthrop handed me the bills without speaking, but I could not keep silent.

"If you only would give me an allowance," I said; "we should be saved this endless jar over bills. I should pay everything weekly, and you would never be frightened at the totals."

"It's bad enough as it is," he said, looking gloomily into his pocket-book. "You harp abominably, Eleanor, if an idea is once fixed in your mind. What is the difference so long as you get all you want?"

"Never mind," I said. "If you do not understand, there is no use in talking of it."

I went out. Fanny and John were in the summer-house, Fanny fastening a rose in his button-hole, and John looking down at her with an expression which told the whole story. I had expected it, but not so soon. He coloured as he met my look; then smiled; the smile of a man who means to win, and sprang from the low wall to the path below where Winthrop in a moment joined him.

"Handsome fellows, aren't they?" said Fanny, quite unconscious of what had gone on. "Do you know they are decidedly the finest-looking pair who go in and out? The Jersey men, the natives at least, are so hard-featured and narrow, John and your Winthrop look so generous and fine in comparison."

I smiled privately at the simply spoken "John," though as we all called him so, it was hardly surprising she should use it. Then I sighed a little too. Love was good, and a true marriage the best life this side Heaven; but all the same, my pretty Fanny would never be quite so much mine again. I had so few, and a shadow seemed creeping between me and them. Tears of self-pity rose in my eyes. Then I shook them away.

"Don't be mandlin, Eleanor," I said to myself. "Nothing is so easy as to dissolve over one's own woes, and nothing is so well as to lock them up and lose the key. Look out and not in. Look up and not down."

"You dear soul!" Fanny said giving me an impulsive squeeze most refreshing in its character. "I know all about it. Oh, you needn't think I don't see, but I know it will all come out right. Wait and see."

"Always waiting," I said. "That is the hardest service in the world. I can fight, I cannot wait. Fanny? What is that! Is Tea crazy?"

Fanny stood spell-bound a moment: then fled into the summer-home and mounted the seat, closely followed by myself, while through the grape-vines and over the flower beds rushed the pig squealing as he came, and leaping from wall to terrace, from terrace to road with a frightful abandonment. After him came Tea with rolled up sleeves and a broken bottle in his hand, but stopped as he saw me.

"Tain't no use Mis' Winthrop," he said mournfully. "That pig's a goner, but I wouldn't a believed it."

"Why is he out of his pen?" I said. "I saw him come out of your house, Tea. What do you mean?"

"Why it's this," Tea answered, meanwhile stretching his neck to look up and down the road up which a faint squeal still came on the wind, "that pig's been kind o' dumpish for two or three days, and stiff like as if he had the rheumatism, and this mornin' he lay out, like he was pretty nigh dyin'. So I thought I'd try that liniment the Indian doctor left. It's powerful strong, an' it couldn't hurt him anyway. He ain't very hefty, an' I got him out an' carried him into the kitchen stove so't I could rub it in well. He took it like a lamb, and the children was all standing round interested as could be, when that blasted pig rose right up under the cookin' stove. I reckon he smarted, for he gave a squeal and a hist, an' away went the loose leg an' down came the tea kettle an' the pot o' hot mash. He knocked everything endways before he got out, an' Almiry's hollerin and pickin' up coals yet. He'll have to be shot. He's scalded as if it was killin' time."

"Shoot him then quickly and put him out of his misery. It is a mercy none of the children were hurt. Run, Tea, or we shall have the whole neighbourhood upon us."

I went up a moment to condole with Mrs. Fuller, who had restored the stove leg, and now sat sobbing among her brood, all wailing in chorus. Mush smeared everything. The pig had been impartial in its distribution, and the room was slimy to sight and touch. Mrs. Slapson was still at the house, having called in search of a possible day's work, and I sent her up at once, much to Mrs. Fuller's satisfaction.

Mrs. Ogden's sense of outrage when she heard the story was beyond telling. She

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positively declined to touch it in any from,
sold it at last to Tea, who had no scruples
and rather enjoyed the destruction of his ad-
versary. That the cow might soon follow
became the next wish; but mush was inad-
quate to this end and once more I waited.

CHAPTER XII.

REST.

"Where is the summer?" Fanny asked suddenly one morning. "I had planned to do everything, and here is August half gone and I've done nothing. What does it mean? I shall practice the whole morning to make up for lost time. It is those abominable jams and 'jels' as Grandmother Ogden calls them, The jel that wouldn't jel, and the jel that did jel. To think how much I know about them all! I'm weighed down with general information and can't see how you bear up so beautifully under it. But where is the summer?"

I could have told Fanny why the last month had sped in such unprecedented fashion but would not. So far as it was possible I had prevented the usual chaffing which accompanies the lovers' progress from singleness to doubleness. Grandmother May opened her gentle eyes widely when I begged her to take no notice, but listened to my views with more attention than they usually received. How I detested the atmosphere ordinarily surrounding such an acquaintanceship, and how jealously I watched lest Fanny's present unconsciousness should be rudely broken in upon and become only an anxious evasion of advances. I wanted it all to grow naturally with no outside influence to either hasten or delay the course of true love. How Fanny could help seeing what lay before her was a puzzle, and privately I concluded that she thought more than I suspected, but kept up the delusion to herself as much as possible. John was not demonstrative. In fact I think Grandmother Ogden had decided he had no intentions whatever, and was rather pleased that Fanny had failed to secure him. I knew he would soon speak, and was only waiting to feel surer, and so the days went on.

Fanny sat down at the piano and began a difficult study, and I shut myself up for some letter writing, which went on quietly for an hour. Then I heard Tea's step followed by loud talking in Grandmother Ogden's room, and at last a rush through the hall to my door.

"I say he's got to go for a cow doctor this minute," she said as I opened the door. "He

needn't talk to me about distemper and a cow that cost forty-five dollars. I won't have it."

"The cow will, even if you don't, ma'am," said Tea. "I'll do anything that I'm told, but you might as well be reconciled."

"What is the matter?" I asked, for both were talking at once, and which had the distemper it was difficult to decide.

"It's round," said Tea argumentatively, "an' why our cow shouldn't have it as well as another cow I don't see. But I ain't certain it's that. She's so pizen ugly it's equal to distemper any time; but now she's standing like a lamb an' her cud gone."

"What difference does that make?" I said.

Tea looked at me pityingly and answered slowly, as if explaining to a child.

"About the same as if you'd swallowed your stomach, supposin' you could, an' was calkilatin' to get along without it. I can make a cud, but I ain't sure about it. There's old Brinckerhoff down the road a piece. He'd know, an' so would Bartelow."

"Go for them then fast as possible," I said, and Tea hitched away.

"It's shiflessness of some sort," said Grandmother Ogden positively, shaking her head. "I'll see to it. I'll hook up that cud if I die for it."

"How can you? She'll hook you. Don't be rash."

"Rash is not my way. I've seen more cows than you're years old. I'll manage her," and the old lady seized a duster and sped up to the barn. I followed, sure of instant destruction for herself or the cow, but poor Molly's viciousness was a thing of the past. Dim-eyed and with hanging head, she stood, a picture of mute distress, and my heart smote me that I had wished her out of the way.

Grandmother Ogden took down the whip, bent it into an oval and tied the duster firmly over it. Then holding the two sides closely together, pulled open the cow's mouth.

"She'll bite. Oh, do stop!" I said. "What do you mean?"

"She won't. This is what they do to a cow. I poke it down and let go, and it flies open, and if anything can bring up a cud it's this."

Twice Grandmother Ogden poked that whip down the unhappy Molly's throat and twice with a shake and a cough it was rejected. Then Tea appeared, followed by two men. Old Brinckerhoff, a dirty yellow, beginning with skin and ending with clothes; old Bartelow, coal black and chewing a straw scientifically. Both wore hats made on the discovery of New Jersey, bell-like as to crown, moth-eaten and fluffy as to nap,

with the general effect of having been sat upon for several generations. Old Brinkerhoff, bearing a knobby stick, long-armed and knock-kneed, with hands warty and unpleasant as a toad's back, seemed the twin of a pale gorilla, at whom I looked with a certain fascination. Tea listened to him with an unlooked-for and respectful attention which showed he must be an oracle, and Grandmother Ogden, daunted by his calm disregard of such mere accidents as two women, was quiet. I left, though she would not, and only some hours later did I hear Tea's account of the consultation.

"I wouldn't a brought 'em both if I'd a known," he said. "For one was so afraid of letting on what he knew to the other that they dilly-dallied, an' shilly-shallied, an' you couldn't get at nothing. I got clean out o' patience at last, an' I ses, 'You go heme, both on ye, an' fight it out together, an' I'll tend the cow.' That brought 'em to, an' they agreed that it was most likely 'Hern all, an' may be 'Wolf in the tail,' an' any way it had got to be opened. Brinkerhoff split it with his knife an' put salt an' pepper an' some sugar all the way down, an' tied it up in cabbage leaves, an' that beast hardly stirred. Bartelow he bored her horns with a gimblet an' rubbed kerosene down the spine of her back, an' she took it about the same way, an' now I'm boiling turnip for a new cud."

"But, Tea, how can she chew boiled turnip?"

"Oh, that's only for the soft. It's turnip you see, an' chopped hay, an' I've come for some yarn to mix in; woollen yarn an' that's something that'll hold. If she'll begin to chew she'll live, an' if she won't, why she won't. It's bad luck for the old lady."

"I never will touch the milk again," I said firmly. "If she gets well, between the salt and pepper and the kerosene, there'll be no natural cow constitution left. Let her die, Tea, and don't torture her any more."

"I'll do what I kin," said Tea mournfully, leaving it an open question whether it would be for or against the cow.

By teatime Molly was declared to be very slightly better. Grandmother Ogden had vibrated between the house and barn all the afternoon, announcing each new symptom or change to Grandmother May, who recommended every bottle on her list of remedies. Both went to bed very early quite worn out with the excitement. Winthrop was deep in a case he had brought home, and had shut himself up in the dining-room, and John looked at me so beseechingly that I went up at last to Grandmother May's

room finding her wide awake and quite ready for a gossip.

As I went finally to my own room, a dark little figure rose from the corner and clasped me convulsively.

"Fanny!" I said, amazed. "What are you doing here? I thought you were down stairs with John."

"I was," faltered Fanny; "but he astonished me so, I couldn't stay there. He's on the roof now, and I've been waiting for you. What shall I do?"

"Nothing that I can tell you, foolish child. If your own mind and heart give no answer, do nothing."

"I knew he would, but I did hope he wouldn't just yet," said Fanny incoherently, pulling me down beside her. "I am frightened to death when I think how much I did not mean to fall in love till I was wiser, and how we have talked about it all, and I don't dare say yes; but I don't dare say no, either. I said he must wait, and he said he would not and could not, and was oh, so bumptious, and made me—just *mule* me promise to tell him to-morrow. O Eleanor, how can I? Do talk to me."

"Not one word," I said imperatively. "You know all I have to say. You know just what John is. Go away. You know your mind is made up, and that all I shall have to do to-morrow is to say—'Bless you, my children, bless you!' No, you cannot wheedle me into expounding any more. Go away."

Fanny hugged me spasmodically; then ran to her room and locked the door. John remained on the roof and went away on the early train next morning, rather to Fanny's surprise, I think, as she had expected to be forced into answering directly after breakfast. She was restless all day, and the return of the cud and Molly's consequent convalescence, did not cause more than a ripple of excitement. Grandmother Ogden herself seemed to think the cow had better be sold as soon as well enough, and late that afternoon went down to old Brinkerhoff's to see how soon a bargain could be made.

John and Winthrop came out together. Fanny kept close to me, evidently knowing it was not safe to be left alone, declined going to walk, and after tea took a book. I withdrew discreetly, but she followed at once.

"I'm going up to see the sunset," she said. "I want the key. Won't you come too?"

"Presently," I said, "when I have finished this bit of work."

She did not lock the door, I noticed, and soon John sauntered by in a disengaged manner, not in the least suggestive of a tortured and distracted lover, and tip toed up the stairs.

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"Bless their silly hearts," I said. "It will be all settled before they come down."

Mrs. Cochran came in just as I had grown tired of waiting and decided to go up, and detained me far into the evening. Grandmother Ogden returned, tired and hot and went to her room at once. Winthrop made himself agreeable for a time, but at last yawned openly. Grandmother May went calmly to sleep, and I had lost the last remnant of patience when at length she left, after various inquiries for the young people.

I had closed the door and shut the bolt with a long sigh of mingled relief and weariness when Grandmother Ogden's voice sounded at its loudest, and she projected herself into our midst like a rocket—fizzing as she came.

"Such doings in a house that calls itself decent, I never heard, no, nor ever expect to. That hussy on the roof and my chairs and my mattress for all the world as if they lived there! 'Roofs often crack after a hot day,' do they? Oh, yes! I should think they might. I wonder they don't open and swallow up such wickedness."

Grandmother May began to cry.

"Is it murder?" she said faintly. "I always did feel as if there might be something dreadful going on up there and those strange noises, but then I never thought John would do it. Has he hurt anybody?"

"It's a pity he hasn't," returned Grandmother Ogden with fury. "A designing hussy out there by moonlight, and doing all she can to trap him."

"That is quite enough Grandmother," said Winthrop imperatively. "Please understand once for all, that if Miss Walton is willing to marry John Wilder, he will be almost as happy a man as I was and am. Not one word about it please. So long as we approve of what you call 'the going's on,' that is sufficient. Use your good sense, grandmother, and be glad John has done so well."

"I'll leave the house to-morrow," gasped Grandmother Ogden, astonished at the turn affairs had taken and almost choked with conflicting emotions. "I'll leave the house and take my things. I won't stay here to be insulted."

"Very well if you like, but go to bed now," and Winthrop actually forced the belligerent old lady off to bed, while I performed the same office for poor little, bewildered Grandmother May.

Fanny and John descended as soon as quiet came, and when congratulations were over told the tale.

"I heard a noise in the attic, but never thought but that it was one of you," said John. "Fanny was sitting on one of those

old chairs and I in the other, and I was too busy combating her ridiculous arguments to listen to anything else. I got her to the point where she had not one more word to say, and in my enthusiasm jumped up and knocked the chair over. We stood there, when suddenly a purple bow rose up through the scuttle and Grandmother Ogden gazed at us, half in, half out, wholly petrified. Never shall I forget that look. She had been poking over her things in the attic, and never would have known if that chair had not gone over. She spoke in the voice of Nemesis.

"My cane-seat chairs and my mattress out in all weathers! Hammocks too, and that hussy here fooling you out of your senses! You'd better take care! A young woman that meets young men on the roof ain't any better than she should be."

"Take care," I said. "She is my wife, or will be as soon as she will let me make her so."

"She glared at us both; murmured again; 'My cane-seat chairs out in all weathers,' and sank down slowly. I don't know what followed."

"I do," I said, "but I am heartily glad she knows. Now the door shall be kept unlocked and we will go up and down openly. I don't wonder she was angry. I should have been so too."

A suspicious creak of the dining-room door arrested me. I sprang to it with such unlooked-for haste that the retreating figure had no time for concealment. A step backward. Then came a heavy fall; a loud, long growl from Nep in the usual place at the foot of the cellar stairs; then, a deadly silence.

Winthrop grew very pale.

"Go," he said. "I cannot."

"It is Grandmother Ogden," John said as he bent over her with the lamp. She lay at the foot of the stairs senseless, one arm doubled under her, and as we lifted her, blood was on her face and shoulder.

Nep, the most peaceful of dogs, suddenly roused from sleep by the fall of this heavy body upon him, had set his teeth in her shoulder and worried it fiercely, slunk back now ashamed of his terror; but the mischief was done. She had stolen down softly to listen and meant to hide on the cellar-landing till we had ended, but my haste had startled her, and a misstep sent her to the bottom.

Poor, wretched old soul! All that night and through the next day she wandered, pulling off splints and bandages to see what the matter was, till we were forced for the time to tie her sound arm to her side. The fracture was a severe one at both wrist and

upper arm, and the wound in the shoulder quite as troublesome. Tea insisted that Nep must be shot else she would have hydrophobia, and showed so much horror at our refusal, that John at last took the dog away and loaned him till she should be well again.

It was a new experience for her. Sickness and helplessness maddened this self-reliant nature, and I doubt if real hydrophobia could have made much more commotion. Grandmother May hovered over her; cried daily at her suffering and endured every pang vicariously; but as the slow weeks dragged on confinement did its work. The poor, pinched face ceased to express struggle and defiance, and only the worn-out, defeated look remained. The bones would not unite properly, and she knew that practically her life was over; the life of grinding care and sordid labour; the life of little things; of petty interests and lowest aims. What was there beyond? I could not tell. An obstinate silence held her, and there I left her. Other hands than mine were to do the work; hands

mighty in their very feebleness. When the summer was over and gone, a new sound was heard in the house, a sound to which Rubenstein listened with grave attention, while Nep picked up his ears jealously.

Grandmother Ogden's face expressed only deep disgust when told that a baby girl had been added to the family, and for the first few weeks she paid no attention to this new proof of "shiflessness." But one day when the child lay by her side and suddenly, smiling the sweet, far off smile of early infancy, clasped her finger firmly with its little hand, a new look came upon her face. What dim memories of her own baby were stirred, I cannot tell. Only, I saw a change. She watched eagerly for the little thing; and was never so content as when it laid near her.

That which time and life had failed to do might still come to her through this new little soul fresh from the Father's house, and again I waited the end with the growing belief, all things are possible. And so with tiny Tim I say, "Good night, and God bless us every one!"

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